He Is a Mess

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He Is a Mess

by koyupembe

Summary

Gemini, a third-year Software Engineering student and die-hard Star Village player, faces a sudden crisis: the female character he's been romancing is pregnant, and hasn’t logged in for weeks. Determined to earn those parenting points, he tracks her down, only to discover she’s actually a "he". He is Fourth, the infamous campus Casanova, gym bro, and a second-year Architecture student.

Gemini somehow convinces Fourth to help, but as the lines between zeros, ones, and real life blur, he starts to wonder if those points were ever worth all this mess.

Chapter 1: He Is Offline

Chapter Notes

Hi guys! I am back with a university romance, sprinkled with some angst and some attempted humor. I used their real names in this one, and I'll be adding tags and characters as the story progresses.

Star Village is a made up game, but you can think of it as Stardew Valley or Coral Island but online.

Have fun!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Gemini was going to be a father.

In just a few months, he would have a bundle of joy in his arms. A gift from the gods. A new beginning, the first step into the next chapter of his life. A gateway to so many future gains.

He was ecstatic.

He was thrilled.

He was so happy that he was going to die from the giddiness bubbling inside his chest.

The only small detail here was that the baby wasn't a real one. Not exactly. It was a virtual one, a pixelated one. It was a baby, yes, but in a 2D online farming game called *Star Village*. But how different could it be from a real baby, right? The idea felt just as exciting, delightful, overwhelming, but, at the same time, just as scary and difficult to cope with. There were so many worries, so many what-ifs, so many questions…

For example, was Gemini fit to be a father? He still hadn't finished the lava cave mission and couldn't receive the Flaming Sword. (What kind of father would he be without a Flaming Sword?) And he still couldn't upgrade his coop to the third level. Not to mention the mess that was his fishing skills.

Another serious question was whether the baby would be a boy or a girl? Not because he cared about the gender, but because he wanted to make a Sailor Moon themed nursery if it was a girl. He used to be obsessed with Sailor Moon when he was a kid, and he wanted his baby girl to look like Sailor Mercury when she grew up. Smart and pretty.

Then came the final question, the one so important that, in the end, none of the above really mattered when it came to this.

Where was the mother?

The mother. The character who was pregnant with Gemini's character's baby. The girl carrying the future of his farm! Where was she?

She hadn't been coming online for the past three whole weeks!

And Gemini knew exactly what that meant. He'd been playing games since the moment he could hold a controller -the curse of being a Gen Z- and experience told him that if someone stayed offline this long, it usually meant one of two things: either something really bad had happened in their real life… or they'd just gotten bored of the game.

But none of these were acceptable to him. He didn't want her to go through anything bad, of course, she was the mother of his in-game child. But she being bored of the game would be the death of his farm! He needed those points. He had to get those points. His life depended on those points!

And this desperation had been the reason why he was at this exact point right now, where he was walking in the corridors of a faculty he had never taken a step in before. Out of his comfort zone. Even out of his mind, maybe.

Up until a week ago, the only thing Gemini knew about this mysterious girl was that she studied at the same university as him. Nothing else, nothing more. The only reason he even knew that much was because she'd once mentioned studying for finals during one of their in-game chats. However, their school was huge, it had forty thousand students. Knowing she went there didn't narrow things down at all.

Gemini knew he had to do something, so he decided to send messages to her acquaintances in the game to see if he could learn a thing or two about her. Most of them didn't really know anything, just small details, like the fact that she worked part-time and was staying in an on-campus dormitory. Nothing too specific.

Then one of them remembered something bigger. She had once shared her real name.

And, it was… *Fourth.*

Now, it was her nickname, and a nickname wasn't nearly as helpful as her government name would be, as it was impossible to search officially. But it was still better than nothing.

Gemini, with this information and newly gained motivation in hand, had bribed all his friends from the student gaming club to help with the search. He had them ask anyone and everyone who would listen if they had ever heard of someone called Fourth, or met anyone by that name. And after days and days of asking around, they finally found a clue.

There was someone by that name in the Faculty of Architecture. Specifically, a second-year student.

Which happened to be the very class Gemini was now standing in front of.

He couldn't believe he was finally here after everything.

He took a deep breath, and before his nerves could get the better of him and he chickened out, he stepped forward and stopped a group of students on their way inside.

“Sorry, guys,” he said with a smile he hoped looked at least a little charming, and ideally not unsettling at all. “I’m looking for someone called Fourth. Do you know if she is in this class?”

The students paused, surprised by the interruption since they had been chatting among themselves, but they remained polite. “Yeah,” one of them said. “Fourth was inside when we came out.”

Gemini nodded in relief, a little too happy about such a small piece of information. “Could you call her outside for a second?”

They agreed and headed in, though Gemini couldn’t help but notice the way they started giggling as they walked away.

Did his hair look that funny today? He knew he should have put a hat on.

But the thing was, he already felt like some creepy stalker for obsessing over the whereabouts of a random girl, he didn’t want to add the way he looked into the mix as well. It wasn’t like he meant anything bad by this self-appointed mission! If the girl said no, he would walk away. Simple as that. He just wanted to try asking -more like begging- face to face before giving up and calling it a day. Sure, it was going to be an awkward conversation, but saving his farm was totally worth the possible social humiliation.

Still, his hair was probably a mess, sticking out and going all directions. It was windy outside, and his curls never behaved when inconvenienced in the slightest. Honestly, they deserved to be giggled at.

Gemini decided not to worry about his looks, as he had no way of fixing it, and started tapping his foot as he waited, mostly out of nerves but also to look busy. A minute passed like that. Then another. And another. Eventually, he stopped staring at the door and moved on to studying the walls, the ceiling, even the patterns in the marble floor. At some point, his mind just drifted off completely, and he spaced out.

And that was when a bald head entered his vision.

“Sorry for the wait.”

Gemini blinked. Huh? What?

He then realized it wasn’t a bald head but a blond buzz cut.

“Oh,” he blurted out loud.

The guy gave him a once-over from head to toe and echoed him, slowly. “Oh?”

Gemini shook his head to snap himself out of it. “Sorry,” he said. “What were you saying?”

The guy squinted a little. He looked like he was having a hard time understanding Gemini, even though the number of words they had traded was not more than five. “They said someone was asking for me. I thought it was you.”

“I- I’m waiting for someone else,” Gemini answered quickly.

He wasn’t intimidated or anything, but this guy was something else. He was a little too overwhelming to have a conversation with.

He had the most piercing stare in those almond-shaped eyes, a perfect slope of a nose, high cheekbones, and shapely lips, not too thin, not too thick. But it wasn’t only that he was too handsome to be casually walking around in a university uniform; he also had a blond buzz cut, two eyebrow slits, and black little earrings dangling on his earlobes. Not to mention the way he carried himself, so confident, so bold, the way he stood there as if he was out of a men’s health magazine, and the big weight of his aura that surrounded Gemini like a personal attack.

He certainly wasn’t supposed to be an everyday encounter.

So whatever words Gemini used to have to form sentences with, they were temporarily having a hard time functioning.

Fourth frowned at Gemini’s response. He glanced around briefly before returning his gaze on him. “Are you sure? They said it was a ‘cute nerdy boy with glasses.’ I don’t see anyone else fitting that description.”

Gemini subconsciously pushed the rim of his glasses up his nose. He still wasn’t feeling very steady. He was even starting to wonder if he was hearing things.

Wait.

“They called me a cute nerdy boy?” he half-shrieked, just high enough to make him feel like a fool.

The guy shrugged, unfazed. “Yeah. Why?”

“No… I mean, I wasn’t expecting to hear those exact words,” Gemini uttered out. He was expecting to be called a *freak with a beanie for hair*, or something along those lines. But cute? Not that.

“Do you disagree with the description?”

“Sorry?”

“Do you not think you are a cute nerdy boy?”

Gemini was confused, so he just stared blankly at the guy for a moment before shaking his head. “Uh… So... I think they misunderstood me and sent the wrong person. I’m waiting for Fourth.”

The guy pointed at his own chest. “I am Fourth.”

Now, Gemini was even more confused. “Huh?”

“You’re waiting for me,” the guy said flatly, as if trying to get through Gemini’s thick skull. “I’m Fourth. There’s no other Fourth in this class.”

The words left his mouth, traveled over mountains and seas, reached Gemini, and hit him like a bolt of lightning in the middle of his chest.

He was Fourth? He was the one behind Gemini’s in-game date?

She was a he?!

“Wait a minute.” Gemini raised his hands between them. “You’re Sunflower04?”

Now it was the guy’s turn to be stunned. His frown deepened as he thought about it, then his eyes opened wide. “That’s my ID from an online game. How do you know that?”

Yes. It was him. She was really a he. Fourth was a guy.

This was the person Gemini had been searching for all along!

How had he never even considered the possibility that Fourth wasn’t a girl?

“I’m Gemiyakii,” he muttered, half as an introduction, half as an explanation.

Fourth didn’t respond first. He took his sweet time to process what was going on. But then, his face suddenly split into a wide smile. He became a whole different person. His expression softened, his perfect, pearly teeth flashed, and his eyes curved into two happy crescents.

Damn, he was too handsome to look at directly without sunglasses.

“Hey, you were my boyfriend in that farm game!” he exclaimed giddily as he patted Gemini’s shoulder like he’d just found his long-lost best friend. “Whoa, you’re exactly how I pictured you! Only a little taller.”

You were my boyfriend? Were? WERE? Past tense? They were already a thing in the dusty pages of history?!

“I was your boyfriend. Until you left me,” Gemini retorted, emphasizing each word and not hiding the heartbreak while doing so.

Fourth tilted his head to the side. “What do you mean? I didn’t leave you. Weren’t we on a date the last time?”

“That last time was three weeks ago! You stopped coming online after that.”

Fourth’s smile turned sheepish as he gave Gemini another quick pat before pulling his hand back. “Yeah, I got busy. And honestly… the game wasn’t that fun for me.”

Gemini felt the second lightning strike crash down, hard, along with a deafening thunder. Not fun? Had he really just called Star Village not fun? What did that even mean?

Fourth kept talking, completely unaware of the storm clouds rolling in behind Gemini's eyes. "I only started playing because everybody was talking about it, but it was just cutting trees, breaking rocks, planting stuff, watering plants… it was just so boring and mundane every day stuff."

BORING? MUNDANE?

"Going on dates was fine, I guess, but you can only do it once a day. Then you're off running around collecting flowers, talking to the mayor about random things, and then someone wants you to bring a tea-"

"Star Village is fun!" Gemini cut in with a protest. "It's so fun! It's the best game!"

"-leaf," Fourth finished his sentence. Then he gave Gemini a long look, with his eyebrows raised high. "I see, you like the game."

"I do! I love it! That's why I've been looking for you for the past three weeks!"

"Me? Why?"

Gemini wasn't expecting to be asked about it directly. At least not yet. So he stalled. "Because…"

But Fourth pressed. "Hm?"

Gemini decided he was going to talk about it sooner or later anyway, why not now? He clenched his fists, took in a deep breath, and let it out. "Because you are pregnant!"

Yes, it was very loud. And yes, it echoed through the hall and made everyone turn to them.

The awkwardness became a living, breathing thing and came to sit down on Gemini's shoulders. The silence stretched long, and it was so unbothered that it acted like it owned all the audacity in the world. Everybody was shocked. Even the ancient ghosts in the walls were flabbergasted.

Gemini cursed hard inside and took a good thirty seconds to find the courage to look up again.

What he ended up seeing was the corners of Fourth's lips twitching.

He was trying not to laugh.

"And here I was thinking why my period was late for three weeks," Fourth said. No, he announced. Also out loud.

Gemini started praying for the floor to open up and kindly accept him inside.

“I- I mean… I mean, your character is pregnant. In the game,” Gemini took a step closer to the boy and tried to explain with a voice almost a whisper. “Game. In the game.”

Fourth raised his fingers to press on his lips, seemingly still trying to hold back laughter, or making a show of it. Yet, “I see,” was the only thing he said.

“In the game,” Gemini repeated, borderline pleading.

Fourth just nodded.

Gemini desperately wanted to get out of there, as quickly as humanly possible, so he forced his brain to come up with a last-minute game plan. He spent exactly two seconds on it and ended up deciding that he was going to roll out his request and start running. Easy. Simple.

He cleared his throat and straightened his back. He also pushed his glasses up again, but that was out of nervous habit. “It’s because our last date was a home date… and apparently, home dates meant doing… that… your character ended up pregnant. You’ve been standing on your front porch in maternity clothes for the past three weeks.”

Fourth kept nodding along like a robot. “We shouldn’t have had sex without protection. That was reckless of us.”

Not a serious bone existed in his body. Not a single one in sight.

“The game doesn’t give parenthood points to fathers unless they’re married to the mother,” Gemini tried to make him understand the seriousness of the situation. “We’re not married. We’re not even officially dating. I can’t marry you if you don’t come online.”

“So you want the points, not me and my poor baby?” Fourth kept playing, now even resting a hand dramatically on his stomach.

“I do want the baby. I want to marry you, too,” Gemini was almost begging now. He was dead set on this, no matter how much Fourth was making fun of him. “But those points are important. I need them to build collecting heads for my sprinklers…” His voice trailed lower and lower after the word “build.”

Fourth rubbed circles on his stomach. “Sounds like a deadbeat baby daddy speech to me. You’re going to use us for sprinkler money.”

“No! Of course not-” Gemini wanted to argue, but his words were cut off, because the professor passed right by and entered the classroom.

Now, everyone, including the people who were openly watching their back-and-forth, was forced to rush inside following her arrival.

“I gotta go! It was nice meeting you,” Fourth said, taking a step back.

“Will you come back to the game?” Gemini called out as a last-ditch effort.

“I’ll think about it. See you later, kiddo!” Fourth shouted before disappearing behind the closed door.

Gemini stood in the middle of the hallway and stared at the brown wooden frame, muttering words only audible to himself. “But I am older than you.”

—

He never came back.

Four days later, on a cloudy Monday, Gemini was still waiting day and night in front of his computer while user Sunflower04 had not even attempted to log into his account.

He was crushed, mentally and physically. He was destroyed.

Ever since that day at the Faculty of Architecture, his friends hadn’t let him live it down. They had been making fun of him nonstop, saying he had found the absolute worst person on earth to impregnate and that this whole thing was a lost cause. They even joked about demanding a DNA test, just to be sure this pixel baby was actually his.

Because it turned out they knew Fourth. The whole school knew Fourth. Everybody knew him, and they knew him too well.

“If you’d told us your Fourth was a guy, we would have told you all about him!” they said. “How do you not know about him? Do you live under a rock?”

Apparently, Gemini really had been living under a rock, or maybe even under a whole mountain, because how else could he have missed the infamous school Casanova, the heartthrob, the one and only Fourth Nattawat?

As soon as Gemini’s friends heard the news, they sat him down and showed him every TikTok video about Fourth; the way he partied with a different girl almost every other day, the way he was spotted with a new one the very next morning. In his arms, on his lap, between his lips… Everyone ate up the rumors while still drooling over the boy as if they wanted to be next. Videos, pictures, and comments seemed endless, no matter how far Gemini scrolled.

And that boy had the audacity to say he was busy? Busy with what? Dating around?

Gemini had never felt this hopeless in his life. He was never going to get those points, was he? His child was never going to know their father. They were going to be born to a forever offline mother and stay on the porch idling until the mods deleted their account one day. Gemini was going to watch them from afar and cry about the future that was taken away from him.

This was so unfair!

That evening, Gemini’s friends forced him out to have dinner because he had been pretending he was glued to his computer desk in his dorm room for the whole weekend. He agreed to go,

thinking it would be a chance to drink his sorrows away. But halfway through their meal, right when he was busy secretly crying inside, his phone lit up with a message.

It was one of his classmates, and the message was simple: Fourth was seen at the outdoor basketball court. Alone.

The rest was a blur for Gemini. He spat out a few half-baked excuses that made no sense to his friends, grabbed his stuff, and rushed out. As he was leaving the restaurant, he called a bike taxi, and in a record time of only fifteen minutes, he was on the sidelines of the court and was out of breath from running the rest of the way in.

Thankfully, Fourth was still there, dressed in sweatpants and a thin, sleeveless t-shirt, playing basketball all by himself.

Gemini hadn't really planned what to do once he got here; he'd just been too happy about getting another chance to talk Fourth into coming back to the game. But now that he was standing here, he found himself blanking out again.

This was his second time seeing Fourth -aside from the endless videos he'd been forced to watch- and in real life, the boy was as intimidating as Gemini remembered. Now he was in casual sportswear, somehow looked like a professional athlete. The way he always managed to look so effortless was… unsettling. There was no getting used to him, Gemini figured.

He wanted to stay where he was for a while and take a minute to gather his thoughts.

Yet, it didn't work.

So he just jumped in. "Um… hello?"

The sound that came out of Gemini's mouth was so small that it would be barely considered a human voice, but Fourth somehow heard it and looked up.

And when he realized who it was, his face broke into a grin, absolutely charming and warm for no reason at all. "Oh, isn't that my baby daddy? What are you doing here?"

Gemini started walking toward him, though his steps were small. "You didn't come back to the game."

Fourth turned his whole body toward Gemini, his smile growing even bigger. "Sorry, I was really busy."

"Busy enough not to open the game for five minutes?" Gemini mumbled as he stood a few steps away from him.

Fourth was quiet for a moment. Then he asked, "Are you pouting?"

Gemini pressed his lips together in an attempt to control his expression. "Of- of course not!" he shot back. "Why would I pout? I'm your phi, you know?"

Fourth gave him a once-over. Again. "Yeah, right."

Why did he never take Gemini seriously? What was wrong with him?

“I really am! I’m in my third year!” Gemini insisted. “Do you want to see my student ID?”

Fourth kept watching him while he chuckled softly. “It’s okay, I believe you.” He then lifted the ball against his chest. “Do you know how to play basketball?”

Gemini thought about it for a second before letting out a sigh and catching the skirts of his sweatshirt. He wasn’t really in the mood for a basketball match, but it seemed like a good chance to earn more time and talk with this stone wall.

“Oh, really?” Fourth called when Gemini tugged the sweatshirt over his head and was left with a t-shirt. “You play?”

Gemini nodded, tossed the fabric aside, and lowered himself into a stance with legs apart and back bent. “Yes, why?” Thankfully, he had worn contact lenses today. He didn’t have the budget for another pair of broken glasses.

Fourth shrugged, faking a nonchalance, but his eyes were full of an excited glint, like a small kid in front of someone else’s birthday cake. “I wasn’t expecting it from you. I guess you should never judge a book by its cover.”

Gemini didn’t even have time to react or feel offended, as the atmosphere suddenly turned serious. Fourth started by bouncing the ball on the ground, the sound echoing in all the corners of the empty court. Pat, pat, pat. He then pointed with his chin at the distance between them, silently inviting Gemini to come closer.

Gemini did take the bait, and rushed over, thinking he was ready for what was coming. He quickly tried to block Fourth’s way by moving side to side with his arms open, but as he went to the right, Fourth was already making a whole turn on his left, jumping high and sliding a clean point through the net.

Only in ten seconds.

After watching the ball hit the ground with a satisfying thud, Fourth turned back to Gemini and gave him a little smirk. But he didn’t comment on his own show, he just threw over a, “You never told me your name,” as if that were the point.

Gemini rolled his shoulders. He wasn’t here to win a basketball game, but he wasn’t expecting Fourth to be that good either. He felt kind of humiliated. “It’s Gemini,” he answered curtly.

“The zodiac sign?”

“Yeah.”

Fourth walked back and picked up the ball. “Gemiyakii makes sense now.” He threw the ball to Gemini.

Gemini caught it over his chest. He tested the weight in his hands first, then started bouncing it on the floor. “What is the meaning of Sunflower04?”

Fourth walked over to stand between him and the basket. “Nattawat sounds like sunflower* backward. And you already know about four.”

Well, if that made sense to him…

“And why is your character a girl?”

Now, Gemini asked that on purpose, planning to make a move as soon as Fourth reacted.

And he did just that.

As Fourth opened his mouth to answer, Gemini dribbled fast, and darted left, then quickly switched direction. Fourth wasn’t expecting to get the same trick thrown back at him, so he seemed stunned for a second, and Gemini used that to his advantage as well. He slipped past Fourth, made his way toward the basket, and tossed the ball up.

The ball hit the rim once, twice, spun around the metal… and somehow fell in.

Fourth ran a hand over his short hair and gave Gemini a surprised smile. “Hey! Not bad at all.”

Gemini swallowed a proud, happy shout and acted like nothing happened. “What were you saying?” he asked instead. He was cosplaying Fourth too much.

And it looked like Fourth could read through him very easily. “I was saying,” he said as he took the ball once more. “The male characters were ugly, and I like pretty things.”

Gemini crouched lower with his eyes on Fourth’s chest instead of the ball, just like he had once read online. The best trick for defending was to follow the body, so the chance of getting tricked would be lower.

Also, it wasn’t like the female characters were that pretty either, but he was too busy to point that out.

When Fourth started his round, he really tried to fake his way out again, but Gemini stayed put this time. He cornered him right where he stood, and after a few failed attempts, Fourth was forced to take the shot from his spot. He jumped high, higher than what a normal human should be able to do, but because Gemini was taller than him, his angle wasn’t too great.

In the end, the ball ended up hitting the backboard and bouncing out.

Gemini caught it on the rebound. He was giggling and kicking his feet inside, but could only let out a small grin on his face. "Will you ever come back to the game?" he called out, not ever forgetting his main goal.

Fourth fanned his t-shirt as he moved to switch positions. “I don’t know, man. I’m really busy.”

With that, Gemini stopped in his tracks. “With what? What could keep you that busy?”

Fourth mimicked his stance and straightened his back. “I’m working at the gym near here,” he said, pointing to his right. “They let me work out for free after work, so I spend a few hours lifting every day. I also have schoolwork.”

Gemini knew what he was *really* busy with, but he didn’t comment on it. “So you are not coming back,” he resorted instead. “You won’t marry me.”

Fourth paused for a second to stare at Gemini. Again. He did that a lot. “Okay, win against me, and I’ll really think about it,” he then offered. “Ten points.”

Gemini nodded. “Bring it on.”

After those three words, the game turned into something else. At least for Gemini, it became pure intensity.

He sometimes played basketball or football with friends for fun, whenever they felt like it, just to pass the time together. But he wasn’t used to a match this serious; he had never moved this much in his life. Fourth pushed hard, and Gemini tried to keep up with him with everything he had. His lungs burned from lack of oxygen, his t-shirt stuck to his back with sweat, and loud groans escaped his mouth. He ran, jumped, and spun so many times he got dizzy.

The most frustrating thing during all this was the fact that Fourth was able to sneak in random topics to talk about here and there, just to throw Gemini off. He asked about Gemini’s major, his student club, and commented on politics and the weather. Gemini answered, even tried to fire some questions himself, but he barely had enough air to keep moving and dribbling.

He wasn’t built to be Fourth’s match. Not even close.

In the end, after almost half an hour, Gemini was literally dead on the floor, his vision dark and the world spinning teacups around him.

Fourth was busy making a small victory lap in a tight circle, and fake-shouting theatrically as if he were addressing an audience. “Ten to six! Fourth Nattawat takes another trophy home! Let me hear the screams!”

Gemini let out a miserable cough.

With that, Fourth stopped and started chuckling. “I’ll bring you water,” he said, still laughing. “And take you home as a consolation prize.”

Gemini coughed more but waved his hand like he was swatting a mosquito.

A few minutes later, Fourth returned with a bottle of ice-cold water. Once Gemini could breathe on his own without any machine’s help, and his vision was steady again, Fourth put him on the back of his bike and rode him to his dorm.

He never mentioned the game. Or his return to it.

Gemini was doomed.

He was never going to be a father.

Chapter End Notes

*Sunflower is thantawan in Thai.

Chapter 2: He Is Online

Chapter Notes

Gemini is so silly :(

Gemini put his books in his backpack, but instead of getting up, he slammed his whole torso face down on the desk and let out a frustrated sigh mixed with a bit of wailing. His life was already so miserable, he didn't have the energy to finish the rest of the classes. Two hours were enough!

"You'll find another wife, you are still young," his friend, William, said behind him. "Don't beat yourself like this over girl issues."

William was Gemini's classmate, and was supposed to be his best friend most of the time, except for days like this. He was also in the same gaming club as Gemini, so he was up to date on Gemini's misery and loved not being company but a paid audience for it (he had bought their drinks yesterday). He had been having the time of his life with this real-life BL series (his words)..

"Shut up," Gemini said in a crying voice, extending the second word until the heavens. "Leave me alone, you bully."

William let out an annoying giggle behind him while he shuffled around, collecting his own stuff. "Come on, lover boy, we should go and eat something before the next class. Food is the best medicine for a broken heart."

Gemini answered this by dangling his arms over the other edge of the desk and wailing even more.

In the end, William slung Gemini's bag over his other shoulder and hauled Gemini's lifeless body onto its feet by force. "I love you, but not enough to starve all day when we have database lab in the afternoon."

"I knew you didn't love me. Nobody loves me except my mom!" Gemini kept complaining, but he did walk out, mostly because his friend was pushing him from behind.

They were the last ones to leave the classroom, so they expected the hallway to be empty, which was why they were still loudly bickering as they stepped outside.

But then, they both froze.

Fourth was there.

He was leaning casually against the opposite wall, arms crossed over his chest and his bag at his feet, posing just as charismatic as its owner.

Gemini hadn't seen him since their second basketball game three days ago, when they met after Fourth had texted him spontaneously, and he hadn't been able to bring himself to mention Star Village again, even after playing for an hour. He had been expecting another invitation for a match, but certainly not Fourth showing up in front of his classroom.

A few silent seconds passed between them, the three of them standing like chess pieces in the hands of a very amateur player.

"What is he doing here?" William finally broke it by whispering against Gemini's neck.

Gemini shook his head as an answer because there was no way he was saying anything out loud, knowing Fourth and his sense of humor.

Fourth gave them a small wave and a small smile. "Hi."

"HELLO!" William responded like he represented the nation, his brothers in religion, and their holy cause. He quickly showed Gemini off and extended a hand to Fourth. "You're Fourth, right? I'm William. I've heard so much about you."

Gemini was going to kill him tonight.

Fourth took William's hand in a firm shake, but his brows were arched with curiosity. He knew what he was getting into. "Oh, is that so? I hope it was all good."

William kept shaking his hand. "Yes. You wouldn't know of him, but there is this friend of mine who is obsessed with you. He keeps crying about you all day and all night. He must have a crush on you or something."

Oh, Gemini was going to cut him into pieces tonight.

Fourth frowned with a fake concern, not even glancing at Gemini."I see," he said. "Maybe you should give him my phone number. I might take him out one day."

William, seeing his joke had landed, dragged it all the way up to the Himalayas without a shred of shame. Of course. "You're so generous. You'd make his dream come true. He's just a pitiful kid, you know."

Gemini decided thoughts and prayers for patience weren't going to work, so he stepped over, held their wrists, and tore them away from each other. "Enough introduction time for you two," he announced. He shot William a death glare before turning to Fourth. "What are you doing here? Are you meeting someone in our faculty?"

"Hey, why are you being nice to him?" William cut in before Fourth could answer. "You're not burning him with laser eyes like you do me."

"Shut up," Gemini muttered through his teeth.

“I was going to ask you if you wanted to have lunch together,” Fourth replied, albeit very amused by the situation. “There’s something I want to talk to you about.”

Gemini got concerned, and his initial thoughts were very, very bad. Every possible disaster flashed in front of his eyes in that tiny fraction of time. Naturally, he didn’t want to hear a word of it anymore!

“Lunch?” he mumbled, turning the word between his lips.

“Yeah, would it be okay for you?” Fourth asked, but not Gemini, it was for William.

“I actually promised I’d have lunch with him,” Gemini tried to insert himself again. Why was he being left out when he was the person who was supposed to eat that lunch anyway? “William was just talking about how he can’t go through the day without having lunch with me today.”

However, it didn’t fly with William. He quickly took Gemini’s bag off his shoulder and thrust it into Fourth’s arms. “I just remembered I was going to call my father!” he announced as he started taking comically huge steps backward. “My father talks a lot. A lot, a lot! It’s going to take forever for me to be free. Go ahead and enjoy your lunch without me, please, friends!”

Gemini knew he was destined to become a murderer tonight, but that secret stayed between him and the gods; he couldn’t say it out loud. So, with an inescapably defeated look on his face, he watched his best friend vanish around the corner, leaving him to face the upcoming despair. Alone. All alone.

Rest in peace, Gemini’s future happiness, along with the whole of William. You could have found a way to exist together.

Fourth took his own bag from the floor and hooked Gemini’s bag over his shoulder along with it. “Let’s go,” he said cheerfully, almost believable in his act of unawareness.

And Gemini had no choice but to nod and trail after him with his head on his chest.

Just like that, they left the school building and started walking to a nearby mall. It was a really short walk, just crossing one block and two streets, but because of the war inside Gemini’s brain, it felt like it took two weeks of barefoot journey in a desert to reach there.

With every step, he considered all the possibilities. Every potential outcome popped up in front of his eyes like little error warning windows: what the discussion could be about, what patches he could install to avoid it, and what kind of firewall might keep it from crashing his system. He even tried to calculate the probability of a positive versus a negative output, but when the uncertainty was this high, it only made his motherboard overheat and release smoke. Not good.

While all these were happening, and as they reached the food court and sat in a small restaurant, Fourth kept talking about how the class he’d just had was kicking his rear and how he had to pull all-nighters for a few days to finish drawing his project. It was quite a

one-sided conversation, with only a few nods and hums from Gemini, but Fourth didn't seem fazed. He kept babbling and chattering, his slight lisp slipping out here and there.

After making their orders and giving the menus back to the waiter, Fourth leaned over the table and tried to catch Gemini's eyes, who was busy spacing out once again.

Gemini wasn't expecting the sudden attention, especially with Fourth appearing in his line of sight out of nowhere. He was caught off guard and looked up at him, surprised.

Fourth held his gaze for a moment before casually saying, "Your eyes are really round."

What? Now, what was that?

Gemini was so taken aback that his eyes probably got twice as round after that comment. For some reason unknown to his own self, he felt an unfamiliar tingling on his cheeks spreading up to his temples, so he acted like he was adjusting his glasses on his nose, but he just wanted to hide his face a little.

Too much attention!

Fourth just grinned, but didn't comment on it. "Good, you are not brooding anymore," he said instead.

Gemini froze with his fingers on his glasses. He only trusted science, but this guy's ability of being able to read everything was just supernatural.

"What are you talking about?" Gemini muttered as he let go of his face and started looking anywhere else instead. There had to be something interesting around here to look at.

But Fourth wasn't ready to let it slide. "You were in deep thought on the way here. Is everything okay?"

Gemini fixed his eyes on a store sign across the hall. Wow. Such red. Much blue.

"Gemini," Fourth called.

Also green! So fascinating!

"There's nothing there, buddy."

Gemini pursed his lips with the second personal defeat of the day and looked back at him. "I'm scared of what you want to tell me."

Fourth looked puzzled. "Why?"

"I'm scared you're going to delete your account."

"Delete my account?"

"You know, from Star Village."

Fourth blinked twice, but then shook his head and started chuckling. “I wouldn’t do something so evil to you,” he said, before adding with a grin, “and to my unborn child, of course.”

Gemini felt sprouts of hope starting to push at the surface in his stomach again, even though he tried very hard to suppress them. “So… what is it about?”

Fourth put on a serious face and propped his elbows on the table. “Okay, listen. I invited you out today because I have a proposal for you.”

Gemini held his breath. “What… kind of proposal?”

“Look, lying is a bad thing,” Fourth started narrating from the times when Earth was just a ball of dust. “It’s very bad, and nobody should do it.”

“Okay?” Gemini said, hoping this was going somewhere.

“But I might or might not have lied to my professors. And I need your help to get out of this.”

Gemini gave him a skeptical look.

Fourth noticed immediately and let out a sigh before explaining. “I need extra credits this semester, and my professors said they’d give me some if I made a new website for our faculty. The current one sucks bad, and I kind of jumped at the chance and told them I could do it.”

“You want my help with the website?” Gemini asked.

Fourth nodded enthusiastically. “Exactly. I know nothing about websites, and since you’re a software engineer, I thought you’d be the perfect person for this.”

Gemini wouldn’t be humble about this because he was quite good at website design, so yes, he really would be the perfect person. But he wanted to hear the rest of what Fourth had to say before agreeing to anything.

“So my proposal is that you make the website,” Fourth said. “And I marry you.”

“What?” Gemini whispered.

WHAT? WHAT DID HE MEAN BY ‘I MARRY YOU’?

Fourth looked more sincere than he ever had before. “I will marry you, give birth to your baby, and we can even make another one if you want. Just save my ass and help me get my extra credits,” he put his hands together in a wai as he finished.

Gemini gasped. Literally. He couldn’t believe his ears.

He was getting married? He was going to be a father?

Finally?!

Fourth continued talking over Gemini's inner freak-out. "You can come to our student room a few times a week to work on the website since you can access the intranet from there, and I'll come to the game whenever we can to gather more romance points. Does that sound good?"

Gemini wanted to shout, cry, and run two laps around the mall, but all he could do was put his hands on both sides of his face and stare at Fourth.

Was he real? Was he being for real?

"What do you say?" Fourth pressed. "You need to talk to me if we are going to tie the knot, you know?"

"Yes," Gemini squeaked out. Okay, that was embarrassing, but whatever. He cleared his throat and tried again. "Yes! I would love that! I'll make you the best website you'll ever see!"

Fourth visibly relaxed hearing this, and started laughing again. "I don't need the best one, I just need a decent one."

"I'll make the best one in the world!"

"Okay, if you insist."

Gemini was still holding his cheeks as he muttered to himself. "I can't believe this. Am I dreaming?"

Fourth's laughter got even louder. Then, out of nowhere, he leaned forward and grabbed Gemini's hands, lowering them to the table. Before Gemini could even process what was happening, Fourth reached over and pinched his cheeks.

Yes. Pinched them.

It wasn't painful, but it was so sudden that a loud, startled yelp slipped out of Gemini anyway.

"See, it's not a dream," Fourth said playfully as he swung Gemini's face side-to-side a few times before letting it go.

Gemini felt the same tingling he'd felt on his cheeks a few minutes ago, but he dismissed it as just the result of the pinch. "So… you're coming back to the game?" he asked again, just to be sure.

"I will," Fourth promised.

Gemini was still reeling from the news when their food finally arrived, and the feeling carried through as they ate. He was floating on cloud nine all the way until they finished with their lunch and returned to campus. He kept giggling all by himself throughout his classes, on the way back to his dorm room, and as he lay on his bed, rolling around and kicking his feet.

Man, this was what happiness felt like.

—

That night, around midnight, Gemini was trying to do homework, but all he could do was daydream and catch himself smiling like an idiot. Eventually, he decided to make a cup of coffee in hopes it would help him focus, and wandered to the kitchenette part of his room. He poured some water into the kettle, grabbed an instant coffee pack, and tore it open.

And that was when he heard it. The beeping.

The message notification sound of his game.

He literally dunked the pack, as a whole, into the cup and flew over to his computer. His fingers trembled as he put in his four-digit password to unlock the screen.

Half a second had never felt so long until that moment.

Then, when the screen was finally unlocked and the game was open, he saw it.

There it was.

A message from Sunflower04, with a beautiful green ‘online’ sign glowing next to his name.

“Are you there, boyfriend?”

Gemini threw his hands up and raised his face toward the sky. “Thank you!” he called out for every deity to hear. “Thank you, thank you, thank you!”

He pulled his chair closer to his computer and started typing in panic mode. *“Yes! I am here! Hello!”*

“Haha, you are cute.”

The kettle went off behind him, just like something else in his brain, but he couldn’t care less about coffee right now.

Before he could put together a coherent reply, Fourth sent another message. *“Do you want to go on a date now? We should collect enough romance points for a proposal, and we are short by 105.”*

“You already know how many points we need for things?”

“I researched a little. If it’s important for my future husband, it’s important to me too.”

Gemini wanted to look away, but he reminded himself that he wasn’t even looking at Fourth directly. This was just a screen!

“Okay, let’s go on a date. I’ll come pick you up from your home,” he wrote.

“Oh, I gotta change into a pretty dress then,” Fourth said.

Gemini led his character onto his horse and left his farm. He passed the village center, rode north, and followed the stone path until he reached the northeast side of the map. Then, he clicked on the server where Fourth’s house was located.

He went straight to the blue house at the end of the row, because he knew exactly where Fourth’s house was. He’d been there more times than he’d ever admit out loud. When he finally reached the porch, Fourth’s character was already waiting in front of the door.

“I can’t put on my normal dresses because I’m pregnant!” Fourth’s message popped up, including an angry emoji at the end. *“I had to purchase a new one from the maternity section. Ate away all my points!”*

Gemini looked at her, and this 2D girl was in a frilly pink dress with flowers on the skirts, and then imagined Fourth behind his computer screen: buzz cut, eyebrow slits, probably wearing a tank top, frowning because he was angry he’d wasted points on this little dress.

Gemini started laughing. He laughed so hard he forgot to type a reply.

Another message popped up. *“Hey! Are we going or not?”*

Gemini wiped his tears under his glasses as he typed with one hand. *“Sorry. Your dress is pretty. I’ll buy you your wedding dress later. I have enough points for both our costumes.”*

“You better!” Fourth answered. *“I am carrying a whole baby for you.”*

Gemini waited for him to get on his horse first, then took the lead. They rode back through the village center and headed for the train station. From there, they took the train to the jungle.

The game world was big, as they added new areas as the player count grew, but it wasn’t huge. It wasn’t an open-world game or anything, and everyone more or less knew every corner of the map.

However, there was this one place Gemini really liked. He went there to fish sometimes because it was beautiful and almost no one ever came there. He didn’t like people seeing him fail miserably at fishing, so it was perfect.

Now, he was going to show it to Fourth, and if the date option appeared, it would be great to have their date there.

They got back on their horses and rode into the jungle, passing monkeys and monkey-god statues, until they finally reached the small waterfall.

Fourth got off his horse first and walked closer to the lake. *“I didn’t know you were such a romantic,”* he typed in their chat box.

“I’m not!” Gemini quickly denied the accusation. “*It’s just pretty here, so I wanted you to see it.”*

“Yeah, and that’s called being romantic,” Fourth replied.

Whatever. Gemini knew he wasn’t being romantic. *“Let me see if we can do a date here,”* he said and gave himself a mental pat on the back because avoiding topics was easier when he was not face-to-face with Fourth.

He clicked on Fourth’s character and started a conversation, and to his luck, there was an option to ask for a date. So he did, and Fourth accepted a second later. After a short cutscene of their characters walking around and chatting -the same thing for almost every location- the game screen returned, and they were sitting on a picnic blanket, eating fruit. This was supposed to take around half an hour.

“Okay, I need to go back to drawing now while these two talk about climate change,” Fourth said.

“Maybe they’re discussing name options for the baby.”

“Nah, my Sunflower is an activist. She’ll give a speech at the world summit later today.”

Gemini laughed silently. *“Okay, I’ll take her there after the date. Good luck with your project.”*

“Thanks. Let me know when you have time to come to our student room,” Fourth said, and then added, *“And don’t forget your homework. You seem a little too excited to care about it.”*

Gemini gave his abandoned books a sad look and sighed. Right. Homework.

—

After that night, a couple of days passed at the same tempo. A date a day in the game, visiting different spots that Gemini liked, a little bit of chatting through the little black box, and then Gemini trying -and failing- to give his sole attention to his homework in his free time.

When Monday rolled around, Gemini was ready to keep his side of the bargain and let Fourth know he’d be going to their faculty after his classes. He finished around 3 p.m., sent Fourth a quick text, and made his way to the Faculty of Architecture for the second time in his life.

When he arrived at the building, he took the elevator as Fourth had instructed and went up to the top floor. Then, turning left, he walked straight until he saw the Student Council sign on a door. That was the room he was supposed to work in.

He knocked on the door twice, feeling a little nervous because going into foreign places and meeting new people was never easy, and then pushed it open with a last-second courage.

The first thing he saw when he stepped inside was a handsome boy sitting at a desk that faced the door directly.

When their eyes met, Gemini felt his tension instantly double. He had known he would be meeting strangers, but suddenly it felt like he was walking into a job interview. This guy looked too professional for a student. His shirt was buttoned all the way up to his neck!

Gemini greeted him with a quick, “Hello,” and a wai, a little sad he had to let go of the strap of his bag. “I am here to work on the website.”

The guy’s face brightened as soon as he realized who Gemini was. He grinned and stood from his chair. “I should have known!” he exclaimed. “You are Fourth’s Gemini.”

Gemini wasn’t Fourth’s, he was technically his own, but biologically also his parents’, but he wasn’t going to say that to a person he had just met. So, he just nodded.

“Welcome. I am Est, and this is Winny, the student president,” the guy pointed to the other side of the room.

When Gemini glanced over, he saw a guy slouched in a chair, with his feet up on the desk, and a textbook thrown over his face. He looked like he was sleeping. Gemini looked back at Est, confused.

Est pressed his lips together. “Don’t mind him, he is a dumbass.”

“Okay,” Gemini muttered.

“He drew all night yesterday and now refuses to go home and take a nap because, and I quote, ‘I am the president,’” Est gave him a long look. “See him protecting his presidential image?”

Gemini stayed silent. Not only did he know nothing about their council, but he also didn’t know anything about their relationship. He wasn’t going to ruin his chance of becoming a father for gossip time.

“Anyway, let me get you settled before Fourth’s class is over,” Est said cheerfully, quickly over his distaste for the president. “Come this way.”

The room had an almost L shape. On the right side, a small corner curled inward, forming an office-like nook with two desks with desktop computers on them. The machines seemed pretty new and had decent-sized monitors.

Est pointed to them as they reached the area. “You can work on these. Just come whenever you want, you don’t need permission from anyone.”

Gemini set his bag on the side of a desk, hit the power button, and sat down. “Thank you,” he said.

“I’ll write down the council’s password on a piece of paper so you can log in even if no one’s around.” Est went back to his desk and quickly returned with a yellow post-it. “Here.”

Gemini thanked him again, and after Est left him to work alone, he focused on the computer screen. He spent a few seconds locating a couple of things, then logged in.

He first opened the faculty's server page, and nearly groaned out loud. Whoever made the last version of the site had coded everything in one giant file without comments, and it looked less like code and more like a supermassive black hole. He still copied the whole mess to the local machine and tried to work on it in his editor, but no, this maze was impossible to escape.

So he decided starting from scratch would save him so much time and headache, and would probably look like Miss Thailand next to whatever this dark brown monstrosity had been. He rolled up his sleeves and began with a clean page.

Making websites was a strange thing. It took so much time, but while dealing with all the letters and numbers, and with near crash-outs and meltdowns in between, hours flew by unnoticed. There would be a guaranteed headache, red eyes, a foggy brain, and sometimes nausea in the mix, but hours could turn into days before anyone even realized it.

That was exactly what Gemini was experiencing when someone plopped down into the chair next to him and a hand landed on his shoulder.

"Ah, to see the cute nerdy boy in his element, and I didn't even have to pay for it."

Gemini blinked stupidly for a moment, then pushed his glasses back on his nose and looked over.

Fourth.

He looked good. No surprises there, he always looked good. But after not seeing him for a few days, Gemini had almost forgotten the impact of his in-real-life presence. Too much aura for a single person.

Then Gemini realized he wasn't breathing. Well, the HTML was still printed in his vision; he was not functioning properly. "Hi," he said. Just so he was being a normal human being capable of greeting.

Fourth looked all over Gemini's face before giving him that, now familiar, warm smile. "Does your hair get any bigger, or is this the limit?"

Gemini let the keyboard go and put his hand on his head, frantically trying to push down his locks. "I ruffle them a lot when I work, and they don't like to be tamed," he answered quietly.

"It's okay, they look cute on you," Fourth scooted closer in his seat and placed his hands over Gemini's, helping him smooth the curls down. "Here, let me."

As soon as Gemini felt Fourth's hands touch his, he pulled them back and folded his own fingers in his lap. "It won't work. They already got too puffy for today." He kept his gaze on the keyboard as he spoke.

Fourth didn't let his head go, though. He kept trying to get his curls to take shape by rolling them around his fingers. "How long have you been working? Sorry, the professor didn't let us go for an extra half an hour."

Gemini glanced at the time, only moving his eyes, as he was afraid of moving his head. “Almost two hours.”

“Oh, it’s been so long. Were you able to make any progress?”

Why was his head suddenly so hot? He’d never experienced a heatwave localized just in his hair area before. “Just the structure,” was the only thing he managed to say.

Fourth hummed in acknowledgement. “Sounds like good progress to my architecture-student ears.”

Then, there was another sound from the back of the room. “Hey, stop bothering him. The boy is already wasting enough time for us for free.”

Fourth let Gemini’s head go, which was a relief, but also strangely odd not to have his hands there anymore.

“Shut up, Ping, I'm already making it up to him,” Fourth called back.

The voice was unconvinced. “I’m sure you’re not paying him enough for the invasion of his personal space.”

“That’s none of your business.”

“The president wants you to leave him alone.”

“The president can go fuck himself.”

“That’s rude,” another voice said. Probably Winny.

Fourth sighed and turned back to Gemini. “Okay, I’ll go so they stop complaining.”

Gemini found the courage to look at him again. “Okay.”

Fourth gave him another smile, which made Gemini immediately regret the courage itself. “Do you want to go out for dinner with us after this? Like, in an hour?”

“Okay,” Gemini repeated the words as if on a mission.

Fourth patted him on the head once more before standing up. “Great. Keep up the good work, boyfriend.”

Chapter 3: He Is Being Too Much

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Gemini woke up thinking about Fourth. Which was unusual. Why would he be thinking about him? As soon as he opened his eyes? Truthfully, he'd been thinking about Fourth for a while now, yes, but it had always been more about the game than about him as a person. Now that everything was settled and they were on track to collect enough points for a proposal, there shouldn't have been any reason to think about him anymore. Right?

If so, then why was he in Gemini's mind at the ungodly hour of 9 in the morning?

Gemini wasn't sure what to make of it. Maybe he'd been seeing Fourth too often lately. Maybe they were spending too much time together. Maybe Fourth kept invading his space a little too often, triggering some kind of hormone release in Gemini's brain, considering he'd been single for a really long time. Either way, it wasn't a good feeling, and Gemini wanted it to stop.

Two days ago, after his first day at work at the student council, he'd gone out for dinner with Fourth's team. The evening itself went pretty eventless. The food was affordable and delicious. The team was really nice, and they seemed to have a great relationship, at least during the times they weren't trying to stab each other.

Winny was the oldest of the four. He acted like the complete opposite of that fact and seemed like he didn't carry a speck of responsibility to save his life, but he was the president. They said he was the only fourth-year member in the council, so he had to take the crown at the beginning of this school year. He had no filter when he spoke, but he was actually a funny guy.

Est, on the other hand, was the real president behind the scenes, even though he was a year younger than Winny. He decided on everything, gave everyone directions, and even gave Ping a free consultation session over his family crisis at the dinner table. Even the way he sat was so upright that one'd think he was the reincarnation of Elizabeth the First. He was born to rule a country.

Then, there was Ping. Ping was Fourth's classmate, a second year, and he was obviously Fourth's partner in crime. Or, he was the partner of the crime itself. He was so misbehaving, so mischievous, that Gemini couldn't help but wonder if a human being was allowed to have this much energy after a whole day of classes. The glint in his eyes was giving the feeling of a bomb waiting to go off at any moment.

Finally, there was Fourth, of course. Gemini already knew him, and he was the same person as always. He introduced everyone to Gemini in great detail, explained all the inner jokes to him, and made sure he felt comfortable with everyone for the whole meal.

However, that was still, hands down, the most uncomfortable dinner Gemini had ever had in his twenty-one-year-long life. Because Fourth was… well, he was Fourth. He sat right next to Gemini, touched his hands, touched his clothes, refilled his drink, gave him napkins, fixed his collars, leaned close enough for Gemini to know what kind of shampoo he was using… And Gemini just didn't know what to do with himself during all that.

He started feeling too hot in his uniform shirt, started sweating a bit, and then started worrying Fourth would smell his sweat, so he tried to sit on the opposite side of his seat, which prompted Fourth to scoot even closer. This went on and on.

So, all and all, it was a nightmare experience. Not recommended. Zero out of ten, would never do again.

Yet now, two days later -although they hadn't spoken a word aside from Fourth briefly popping into the game between his project work and part-time job to let his character go on a date with Gemini's- Gemini found himself thinking about him at the most random moments. Just like this morning. And just like how he was doing right now. He didn't like it, he didn't want it, and he certainly didn't need it.

Gemini wasn't stupid. Okay, he wasn't super smart or anything, but he knew these weren't normal things to feel about a friend. But he also knew he wasn't attracted to Fourth, because he didn't have the ability to have an attraction for anyone. It wasn't in his software. He just wasn't made to become a lover in this lifetime.

He'd had a girlfriend all through high school, for three years, and they broke up when she moved to Belgium for university. Gemini realized the fact about himself exactly then, because he hadn't been affected by the breakup at all. He'd been sad that someone he'd spent three years with was suddenly gone; they'd spent so much time together, and he'd grown used to having her around, but it hadn't felt the way it should have. He hadn't cried, hadn't longed for her, he'd even stopped thinking about her altogether after a few weeks. Honestly, he felt like he'd probably always known he hadn't loved her the way she'd loved him.

Since then, he hadn't liked anyone else either. In the years after his ex had moved away, he'd decided love just wasn't his thing. He was far more interested in video games, sci-fi movies, old sitcoms, his toy race car collection, and any piece of clothing with Patrick Star on it. He saw everyone as a potential friend, never as a potential significant other, and he felt quite put off when they approached him with motives that weren't purely platonic. He simply didn't develop those feelings for anyone.

The point was, he wasn't feeling anything for Fourth either. There had to be a logical explanation for what he was currently suffering from, but he was going to find out the reason and was going to solve it quickly before it could start interfering with his daily life.

He thought this as he could still feel the warmth of Fourth's palm on his stomach when Fourth had leaned over to grab something behind him and used that spot for support at dinner two days ago. Gemini then decided he wasn't going to be able to finish his sad-looking bowl of cereal. He got up and went to class.

—

During his classes, Gemini was finally able to take his thoughts under control and stop freaking out, thanks to his labs making it impossible to focus on anything other than staying alive. He spent the rest of the day feeling like a normal human being, back to his normal senses and doing what he normally did on normal days. He bickered with stupid William (he was still not forgiven), had fried chicken with him for lunch, and ignored the frantic texts coming from his student club's group chat because they were trying to decide where to go for their 'ice-breaking trip' and Gemini had no idea what kind of ice-breaking they were going to do in the middle of the semester.

After his classes were over, he said goodbye to his dear friend (practically throwing him into the piranha pit that was their student club) and headed to Fourth's faculty all by himself. He felt confident he wouldn't have any weird thoughts anymore. He was safe. First, because he'd be busy with the site, and second, because Fourth had mentioned he'd be working on his model today. He wasn't even going to be there!

Gemini merrily skipped toward the student council room, wondering if he should've grabbed a cup of coffee before coming. The sudden disappointment of not having an iced coffee in his hands was written all over his face as he turned the doorknob and pushed the door open… only to find Fourth in the middle of the room near the kitchenette, crouched over a huge house model made of papers and sticks, completely absorbed in his work and looking far too handsome to exist so casually. Damn.

Gemini lingered in the doorway with the door still hanging open.

Why was he here now?!

The movement, or maybe the lack of it, finally caught Fourth's attention. He looked up and saw Gemini in the doorway. He didn't stand up, but straightened his back and gave a slow, deliberate smile that reached his eyes, little twinkles sparkling all over.

"Hello there," he greeted in a low voice. "What's the reason for your pout this time?"

At that point, Gemini's brain was still trying to process the reality of Fourth being in the room against what he had been imagining all day. So naturally, he mumbled the truth, "I wanted iced coffee."

"You wanted iced coffee? Why didn't you get it then?" Fourth asked it with a confused face.

Gemini kept staring at him. "I forgot."

Two seconds of silence passed between them before Fourth started laughing. He waved a hand, calling Gemini inside while still chuckling. "Come inside. Why are you standing there?"

Gemini swallowed the excess water in his mouth and stepped inside, quietly closing the door behind him. He took a few careful steps into the room as he reassured himself mentally over and over. He was okay. He wasn't being that awkward. He was not fazed at all.

"Come sit with me for a minute, I need your help," Fourth called for him before Gemini could walk past.

Here we go, Gemini thought. He was totally cool. Calm and collected. Not fazed. Not at all.

He went around the table and sat across from Fourth.

When he was settled, Fourth pointed at a stick. "Can you press your finger on the side so I can glue this support on the inside?"

Gemini raised his hand and placed his index finger against the stick. "Like this?"

"A little stronger," Fourth murmured as he caught Gemini's finger between his two fingers and gave the tiny stick a gentle push.

That brief contact sent a jolt through Gemini's system. He closed his eyes for a second to curse at the dawn of humankind for causing him to feel this way. And while his eyes were closed, he realized maybe he wasn't as cool and collected as he had previously hoped.

Thankfully, Fourth quickly withdrew his hand and started gluing the inner part of another stick, then putting it on the upper line of the wall. He was concentrating hard, with his bottom lip caught between his teeth and a deep line etched between his brows. His eyes were flickering up and down, trying to keep everything in control and in his sight. He looked different when he was serious like this, as if he'd been wearing a mask and now it was down for a little while.

"Stop staring, I don't want to mess this project," Fourth muttered without removing his eyes from where his fingers were.

Gemini immediately looked down at his lap, that familiar tingling back in his cheeks. "I wasn't staring."

Fourth didn't answer or react, but kept working on carefully positioning the stick to stay exactly where he wanted. After a few minutes, he asked Gemini to hold another piece, then another one. Time passed with no other words exchanged between them, only the quiet rhythm of their work, and Gemini had never realized silence could feel this loud. He felt like he could hear his own heartbeat in his chest.

He was hyperaware of everything, his skin crawling with the urge to run, yet his eyes kept landing on Fourth's face over and over until he forced himself to look away once again. His body seemed to forget how to breathe, so he had to do it manually every time he felt out of oxygen. He wanted to shake his legs, but worried he might disturb the work. He was far too nervous for what should have been a casual meeting.

“Okay, now put your palm against this wall, like this,” Fourth said, holding his own palm upside down. “Try to cover both levels.”

Gemini did as Fourth instructed, pressing his palm against the outer wall of the house.

“Good,” Fourth murmured in his hushed voice. “Don’t move. I need to check if the wall is straight.”

He dipped his hand into the house and placed his middle and ring fingers at the base of the wall Gemini was holding. Then he began to drag them up slowly. He went up, up, up, grazing over Gemini’s fingers, brushing past every knuckle, and finally reaching his palm through the thin layer of paper.

Gemini watched Fourth’s fingers move as if in a trance, the warmth now tickling the heel of his palm, feathery, so slow, almost deliberate.

He felt something pooling low on his stomach, his insides twisting, his heart crashing against his rib cage desperately. He looked up, timidly, just to have a broader view, to give himself a little more room to breathe. To feel less trapped. Less like he was about to crumble.

Yet he found Fourth staring at him.

It was never easy to read Fourth; it always felt like he stood behind a curtain. Even now, just a few centimeters away, all his features visible, closer than he’d ever been, his gaze remained cloudy, impossible to know what he was thinking. His eyes were wider than usual, pupils dilated, lips parted, yet that faint frown was still intact.

He kept his fingers pressed against the edge of Gemini’s palm, immobile, firm, while holding Gemini’s gaze with the same firmness.

Seconds passed as if the world had frozen around them.

One… two… three… four… five… six… seven.

And Gemini tore his eyes away. He exhaled the air he’d been holding. “I- I- I should work on the site. It’s get- getting late,” he stammered as he quickly grabbed his bag and stood up.

He felt Fourth’s eyes on him but didn’t look back. He walked to the desks and sank into a chair rather clumsily, almost falling onto it, but made it look like he’d plopped down on purpose. Once he was safely seated on the cushion and his bag was on the floor, he paused before doing anything else that might potentially embarrass him even further. He breathed in and out, in and out, staring at the keyboard.

Not long after, he finally heard Fourth resume his work, and the sound helped him relax a little. With their backs now facing each other -and knowing Fourth could no longer see him- Gemini pressed his face into his hands, crushed his glasses against his palms, and reevaluated every life choice he’d ever made. This was far too much action in too little time for someone who’d been living a quiet, peaceful life until now. He was overwhelmed, overstimulated,

overcooked, and all he wanted was to curl up in bed and hug a stuffed animal very, very tightly. Too bad he'd never thought to buy one until now.

His fingers were still a little shaky as he turned on the computer and typed in his password. He wanted to trust his muscle memory to help him this time because he couldn't rely on his knowledge or judgment at the moment. He opened the editor, eyed the familiar colors of the code on the black background, and pushed through.

The next hour or so passed in a haze. He jumped slightly whenever Fourth made a noise behind him, but thankfully, it didn't happen that often, and thankfully, he still managed to get a bit of work done against all the odds.

Then, at one point, he heard the noise of the door opening and closing, and when he checked, Fourth was gone. Yet, before Gemini could even feel the room get too silent or too empty, he was back.

Gemini wasn't looking toward the door when he heard it open again, but he could tell Fourth walked straight over to the desks. When he reached Gemini, he sat on the chair next to him sideways -just like last time- and placed a cup of iced latte on the desk beside the keyboard. "I hope you're not lactose intolerant."

Gemini instantly forgot about all his internal wars, all the awkwardness, and all moments of shame as he gazed at that beautiful cup. It looked like heaven itself. It was made by angels, with the milk from angel cows, and coffee beans from angel plants. "I'm not," he breathed out. "You got it for me?"

"Of course, silly. Who else? I thought you were going to dry out without your coffee here."

Gemini gave him a quick look. "Thank you."

"You are welcome," Fourth said with a happy grin.

Gemini took the cup and took one big sip from it. He smiled to himself as the coffee washed down through his throat and lit all the candles in his brain one by one. So good. So great. So perfect.

Fourth was watching him very intently. "Is it good?"

Gemini nodded. "So good."

"Good," Fourth echoed him. "Drink it, and I'll drop you off at your dorm after you are done."

—

After they got on Fourth's bike and rode to Gemini's dormitory, Fourth told him they were going to meet at Winny's condo for some drinks on Saturday, and invited Gemini to join them. Gemini wanted to go upstairs and be alone with himself as soon as possible, so he gave

Fourth a half-hearted “Okay,” and ran inside the building before any further interaction could be possible.

He kind of forgot about that invite in the following days, and even went to the council room once more on Friday. That day went relatively fine. Fourth could only drop by the room for half an hour, he apparently came between his classes just to bring Gemini coffee, and left not long after saying hello and helping Est with some paperwork.

So when Saturday rolled around and Gemini remembered about it, it was already too late to back out of the promise. Because the first thing he saw when he woke up was Fourth’s text with the address of Winny’s condo. Naturally, Gemini did what any other person would do, and called William to invite him as well. If Gemini was going to spend a whole night in the presence of Fourth, in his natural habitat and with alcohol, there was no way he was going without his emotional support animal.

It was a little past 8 p.m. when Gemini reached the condo, with William trailing after him and asking way too many questions about the council members. Winny greeted them in the lobby and took them upstairs, and when they entered the room, Gemini saw that everyone was already there, including two first-year council members. They were all sitting on the floor around the coffee table, with their drinks and snacks already open.

Gemini looked around the room until his eyes finally found Fourth, sitting on the right side, leaning against the sofa with his head tilted and a ghost of a smile playing on his lips. He was wearing a loose, sleeveless t-shirt and long shorts, and still managed to look better than ninety-nine percent of the population.

Gemini waved at him awkwardly, which earned him an amused chuckle and a small wave in return.

“Guys, this is Gemini’s friend,” Winny announced after he kicked his slippers away at the entrance and joined them in the living room. “It was William, right?”

William gave everyone a wai. “Yes. Nice to meet you. I hope I’m not disturbing.”

“Not at all. The more the merrier,” Winny said as he patted William’s shoulder in a very uncle manner.

“Gemini gets scared when he has to do things without me,” William added. “I had to tag along.”

Gemini gave him a dirty look. “You know you have the freedom to shut up sometimes, right?”

William shrugged.

Then, another voice cut into their lovely conversation. “Nice to meet you, William. Come sit here so I can introduce you to everyone.”

Gemini already knew it was Est without looking, so he was still watching William, in real time, as he turned around and saw Est for the first time.

It was like a movie scene, the way William's eyes widened in slow motion, the way his mouth dropped open, and the dramatic sound of his breath hitching. He couldn't answer Est, he couldn't move; he just stared with the most stupid expression on his face known to humankind.

"No, William," Gemini whispered. "Not now."

The thing was, William was a serial crusher. He liked everyone as long as they were out of his league, which wasn't a small number considering how dumb he was. And the most pitiful part was that he was not above chasing after every one of those crushes, as if pride were something his system could detect. He would shower them with compliments, gifts, and letters all day, every day, making people sick and tired, until he either got rejected, was ridiculed, or found someone else to like instead.

And now, his new victim seemed to be Est.

"William," Gemini insisted between his teeth. "Please."

But William was not listening. No. He was already on the move, walking toward Est as if he were possessed.

Gemini watched his best friend practically leap across the room to reach Est, take a spot beside him with a demure smile, and pretend to be meeting people, but more like watch Est's face way too closely.

So Gemini sighed. There was nothing else he could do. After handing Winny the two plastic bags of beer he was still holding, he stepped over people and started making his way toward an open spot in the corner.

But before he could reach it, someone caught him by the wrist. And he knew it was Fourth.

"Come, sit here," Fourth said, pointing to his right with his head.

Ping was sitting exactly where Fourth was showing, and Gemini communicated that with his eyes. "It's okay, I'll sit there."

Fourth kept holding Gemini's wrist as he nudged Ping with his elbow until Ping got the message and scooted away.

Gemini swallowed the humiliation of this unnecessary act and sat next to Fourth, with no other choice. "I could've sat there," he said silently.

"It's better if you sit here," Fourth replied, nonchalant.

"Why?"

"Because I like seeing your pout up close."

Gemini gave him a stink eye. “I wasn’t pouting.”

“But you will, eventually.”

“How do you know that?”

Fourth couldn’t respond, and Gemini wasn’t even sure if he’d intended to, as Winny appeared with a bottle of beer for Gemini and took a seat on the left side of the coffee table.

“Gemini, tell me,” Winny began, crossing his legs. “Are you dating anyone?”

Gemini immediately shook his head. “No, phi. I’m single.”

“Oh, why? You are so good-looking, you should be making the most of it.”

Before Gemini could open his mouth, William jumped in. “Phi, don’t even ask. He doesn’t believe in love.”

Winny gave Gemini a confused look. “Huh?”

Gemini bit his bottom lip. He didn’t mind talking about these things, he’d always been very open about his loveless life, but he wasn’t sure why he felt self-conscious with Fourth listening. “Not that I don’t believe in it, I just can’t fall in love,” he said quietly.

“So, you’re asexual?” Ping asked from his right.

“Aromantic,” Est corrected him.

William, literally, cooed a second later. “You know so many things. So knowledgeable.”

“Aromantic?” Ping echoed Est.

Gemini kept worrying his lip. “Probably, yes.”

“You know, the one next to you is the same,” Winny said casually. “He never falls in love, so he can experience having sex with everyone he lays a finger on.”

“Phi,” Fourth cautioned

Gemini glanced at him from the corner of his eye.

Winny made a face at him. “What? It’s true. Everybody knows it. Do you think Gemini and William don’t know about your adventures?”

Fourth turned his face toward Gemini, but Gemini looked away before their eyes could meet.

“He’s been busy with his midterm project these days, that’s why he can’t play around,” Winny continued, taking a sip of his beer. “See him after he hands it in, and he’ll be walking around with hickeys all over. He has no shame.”

“Not his fault if girls want to mark him,” Ping chimed in. “Am I right?”

Ping reached over Gemini and tried to shake Fourth by the shoulder, to get a reaction. He was laughing out loud with the first-years joining him.

However, Fourth didn't respond. He was too silent, considering the light-hearted atmosphere in the room. Gemini wasn't sure what Fourth was doing, because he himself was more interested in his beer bottle than looking at Fourth and potentially imagining hickeys on his neck, but he could feel Fourth's body stiffening next to him.

"Okay, okay, let him be," Est called out. "He doesn't want to talk about it in front of… our new friends. Change the topic."

Winny watched Fourth for a few more seconds with a puzzled expression, but he carried on and very much instantly found something else to talk about.

The next few hours passed in meaningless chatter. They talked about movies and sports, their professors, and the latest campus gossip. They played a few games and laughed so hard they were in tears at one point. Bottles came and went, one after another, slowly piling up in the corner of the room.

Ping told them horror stories, but because his words were so slurred, they couldn't listen to him from their own laughter. William tried to do celebrity impressions, Est tried to sing a ballad song, Winny tried to take a nap, and everybody tried to keep him awake. Even Gemini was being loud, and it didn't happen that often.

Eventually, Gemini got up to use the toilet. His body was being pulled to the right, so it wasn't easy to get into the bathroom, and he couldn't help giggling at his own struggle as he tried to aim properly into the bowl.

After washing his hands, probably for too long because he'd zoned off for a while, he came back to the living room.

And the room was empty. Everyone else had disappeared. Only Fourth remained, sitting on the couch and watching him with droopy eyes.

"Where are the others?" Gemini asked. It felt like he had walked into a parallel universe where everyone had been abducted and left only empty bottles and snack packs behind. Then, there was this ridiculously handsome alien in human form waiting for him.

Fourth didn't even blink. "Did I ever tell you that you're so cute?"

Gemini blinked. *What?*

"You are cute," Fourth repeated, then nodded to confirm his own words.

"Thank you?"

"Why are you standing there?"

Gemini spread his arms. "Where are people?" he tried asking again.

Fourth frowned and looked around, as if he didn't understand what Gemini was talking about. Then he looked back at Gemini. "They went to buy more beers before 7-Eleven stops selling alcohol."

That made sense.

Gemini walked past him and sat on the couch next to him.

"You shouldn't call me cute, you know?" He tried to sound serious, but he wasn't really the one in control of his voice. "I'm your phi."

"I don't care," Fourth said.

"You call Est phi, why don't you call me phi too?"

"I won't call you phi."

"Why?"

Fourth raised his shoulders for a shrug, but they stayed up a little too long. "I don't call people I want as phi."

A moment of silence fell between them.

Gemini turned to look at Fourth, and saw that his cheeks, all the way up to his ears, were bright red. He'd never seen Fourth blush, or get shy, so this was new to him. If it weren't for the ungodly amount of alcohol pumping in his veins, he would probably be hiding under the couch they were sitting on. Instead, he just felt like laughing.

Fourth had been calling Gemini cute, but who knew he could be so damn adorable as well?

Fourth turned toward him and gave a nervous glance. "I'm sorry. I think I drank too much."

Gemini couldn't take his eyes off the redness on Fourth's cheeks as it slowly spread down his neck. "You want me?" he asked bluntly.

Fourth didn't match his eyes. "Isn't it obvious?"

Gemini wasn't sure. He didn't have the capacity to process little nuances in that moment. "Is it?" he asked.

Fourth groaned as he rubbed his palms over his face roughly. "I should've been smoother about this."

Gemini wasn't sure what came over him. It wasn't like him; he would normally never do something like this. Maybe it was the alcohol, maybe it was his own overworked nerves, but he reached up, grabbed one of Fourth's wrists, and pulled it away from his face.

Now with only one hand covering his face, Fourth looked at Gemini, stunned.

But Gemini didn't stop there. On top of everything, he went ahead and ran his mouth, too. "You're covering the blush."

And with that, a miracle enough for ten years of Christmases happened, and Fourth went even redder.

Gemini let go of the wrist he was holding. He meant to reach for the other one to remove it as well, but before he could even attempt to do it, Fourth caught his wrist instead.

Then, Fourth blurted out, "I want to kiss you."

Gemini blinked. Their hands hung in the air between them, and a burning sensation shot through the spot where their skin met. The air froze, the world stopped spinning. Nothing existed except Fourth's words, echoing through the entire living room.

But Fourth spoke again, adding more fuel to the fire. "Let me kiss you."

And Gemini nodded.

He just nodded, as if everything made sense. As if it were the most normal thing to do.

At first, Fourth didn't react. He looked as surprised as Gemini at this sudden turn of events. He first removed his hand from his face, then let go of Gemini's wrist. He didn't rush, as Gemini would expect from the desperation of this tone. Instead, Fourth scooted closer, and since they were already not sitting too far apart, a single push was enough for their legs to line up.

He then put a hand on Gemini's cheek, very gently, and pulled him closer.

Gemini's eyes fluttered closed. His senses swayed as he felt Fourth's breath hit his skin, his heart started beating in his throat, and his chest trembled with anticipation.

One second passed, two, three…

Then a pair of soft lips closed over his own.

And Gemini felt goosebumps form all over his body.

The first contact was nothing but innocent. Just a prolonged press of lips, light, velvety. Yet, it was enough to make Gemini feel like he was too much to fit in his own skin. He thought he might collapse, mentally or physically, so he reached out and grabbed Fourth's t-shirt, somehow hoping for support from that thin layer of fabric.

The second one was firmer, a little more insistent.

And the third one was the one that made Gemini come undone and actually respond.

Then, they started kissing.

It was unhurried. It became wet as they locked their lips together, got more savory with every pull, and got bolder with every push. Nothing too much, nothing too far, supposedly nothing overwhelming.

After a while, just when Gemini felt like he was catching up with the moment, Fourth moved his hand lower and let his fingers delve into the hair at the nape of Gemini's neck. He tilted his head to the side, silently asking Gemini to open his mouth.

And Gemini was too far gone to resist the request. He let Fourth in.

The first thing Fourth did was lick the inner line of Gemini's bottom lip, just brushing the edges of his teeth, and Gemini could swear that tiny touch made him see stars for the first time within the Bangkok borders. His breath got stuck in his throat, and he ended up grabbing Fourth's waist through his t-shirt, holding onto the skin. He was dizzy. He was losing his mind. He couldn't keep up, but he was right in the middle of it all.

He wanted more. He knew he did.

And Fourth knew it as well. So, he gave him more.

Fourth deepened the kiss, no time wasted. He dived in, no restrictions, no manners, no shame. He left behind the hide-and-seek game, stopped waiting for Gemini to come out, and started hunting instead. He traced every corner inside Gemini's mouth. He licked, drew out, and sucked on Gemini's tongue, turning his vision white for a second. He tasted Gemini's lips all over, relishing them, owning them. He consumed Gemini as a whole.

Gemini couldn't recognize himself, but he didn't even want to try. He just followed Fourth. Whatever Fourth wanted, Gemini gave it. Whatever he needed, Gemini served him. He felt his logic being buried deeper and deeper, yet he was happy with every shovel of dirt piling on. He had never felt this free, but this bound at the same time.

The kiss never got too fast, never spiraled out of control. Yet it was painfully sensual, and grew heavier with every heartbeat.

Still not having enough, Gemini found himself tugging on Fourth's waist with a silent plea. It wasn't enough that his lungs were filled with Fourth's scent and his senses completely consumed by Fourth's taste, he wanted to feel him even closer. He wanted to bathe in his warmth, to be crushed under his presence. Just a little more. A little bit more.

Fourth placed his other hand on the other side of Gemini's face and gently pulled back, just enough to see his face.

And Gemini wished Fourth hadn't done that, because now he could see Fourth's swollen, dark pink lips behind his fogged glasses, and he knew this scene was forever seared into his memory. It was the most beautiful thing he'd ever laid eyes on.

Fourth didn't say anything. Gemini wasn't sure what was written on his face, but it must have been something bad, because the next second, Fourth exhaled a long breath and pushed himself up. He swiftly climbed on Gemini's lap, straddling his legs.

When he was settled above, he caught the handles of Gemini's glasses and slid them off his face. He folded them and threw them somewhere on the couch, then put his hands on both sides of Gemini's neck and leaned their foreheads together.

"Oh, pretty boy. You are going to kill me," he whispered as if he were in pain.

Gemini tried to keep his eyes open so he could see more of Fourth's disheveled expression, but it was so hard when Fourth was so close and when he was luring him in with those words and soothing his soul with that voice.

"You taste so good and smell so good… and feel so good," Fourth sighed again. "I should stay away from you. I know I should."

Gemini's hands were resting on Fourth's legs, those strained and strong thighs on his lap, and he inched them higher ever so slightly to feel more of them.

Fourth kept mumbling. "I knew it when I first saw you. I told myself to stay away. But it's just so-"

But Gemini honestly couldn't wait for his monologue to be over, so he reached up and closed the almost nonexistent gap between them, trapping Fourth's words between their lips. He couldn't understand a word anyway. His ears were ringing with the amount of adrenaline he was producing. He was feeling the highest form of recklessness with the need he was experiencing. He was a wreck. He wasn't himself anymore.

He pushed his tongue into Fourth's mouth, picking up exactly where they had left off. As Fourth fell back into the kiss and let his weight settle onto Gemini, they found their rhythm instantly. They melted onto the back of the seat, becoming one, chest to chest, hips to hips, hands moving up and down. Their breathing sounds loud and harsh, lips smacking, lapping.

Gemini thought he could live in this moment for days, even weeks, riding this exact high and feeling these exact nerves. He could build a house here, plant flowers, and feed endlessly on whatever Fourth was giving him in that second. He wanted it to go on and on until he couldn't hold back anymore. He wanted to experience anything and everything this could lead to, including all the moments in between.

But something was off.

There were noises. Foreign noises.

No, not foreign, it was familiar, but it didn't belong to them. It was coming from outside. It was getting louder and closer.

For the second time, Fourth pulled their lips apart. With eyes wide open, he pushed himself up and grabbed Gemini's arms, making him stand up with him.

"What's going on?" Gemini tried to ask.

But Fourth was already pulling him out of the living room and guiding him down the small hall toward the bathroom. When there, he pushed Gemini inside and turned the light on.

“They are back,” he explained quickly. “Calm down, okay? Wait inside until you feel better.”

Gemini frowned. “Better?” He was better.

Fourth pointedly looked somewhere down on Gemini’s body and back up to his eyes again. “Don’t come out until you feel calm again. You understand me, right?”

Gemini nodded, probably, and a second later the door was closed on his face.

Then, he heard the noises, their friends’ loud chatter filling the condo.

Calm, Gemini repeated to himself. *Don’t go out until you feel calm again.*

Chapter End Notes

Oh, my pretty boy.

Chapter 4: He Is Confusing

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Some people had evil twins, and those evil twins did whatever they wanted. They were selfish, thoughtless, unruly, and very, very, very greedy. So very greedy.

Gemini had one of those, but his twin was the evilest twin he'd ever seen. He wasn't a thief. He wasn't a murderer. He wasn't even a swindler or a red-light runner. No. This twin was someone who had made out with a drunk man on a couch at an innocent home gathering in a friend's condo. Heavily. Desperately. He would have gone even further if it hadn't been for the forceful interruption of the bystanders. He'd even had the audacity to support a boner. He was pure evil. More evil than Lucifer himself.

How dare he? How dare he do this to Gemini?!

Last night, after staying in the bathroom for ten minutes, deep breathing and thinking about the most random things to "calm down", and after coming out and finding Fourth long gone, Gemini had sat in a corner of the room and silently waited for his friends to be done with the night. Thankfully, he'd still been incredibly drunk, even more so after the fun and games on that damn couch, so he hadn't had a hard time dissociating for a long while.

But now, it was the next morning. He was in his bed, he had a bad headache, and he wanted to stab himself about a hundred times. Life was so good, man.

He didn't want to believe it. He didn't want to acknowledge what had happened last night. It hadn't been him, and he would never do those things, not even if he were forced to! He didn't have any feelings for Fourth. He wasn't even attracted to Fourth. Fourth wasn't anything to him!

Last night hadn't happened. None of it was true. End of self-discussion.

Or not, because Gemini was still thinking of ordering a katana.

How was he going to face the guy again? How was he supposed to go to the council room and work on that site if Fourth was there? With those pretty lips, which Gemini knew the taste of? With those thighs, which Gemini knew the weight of? And with those eyes, which had seen… the thing?

There was no way. Just no real way in actual life.

How did someone go from being Gemini to kissing Fourth? That was an impossible leap in fate.

He was just a guy who liked his online games and did computer stuff for a degree. He wasn't supposed to be having *the Fourth Nattawat* on his lap in any possible future. He wasn't

supposed to have anyone on his lap, for that matter. All he wanted from life was to have a wife and a baby, but in a 2D game! How had he ended up making out with the school Casanova of all people? How had he even managed that? Was he that mighty?

He wanted to stay in bed forever. Maybe he would rot there, turn into a bunch of mushrooms, and become part of nature. That would be amazing. That way, his evil twin couldn't come out to kiss hot guys, acting like he could ever handle them.

Win-win for everyone named Gemini.

But then, his phone buzzed on the bedside table.

And Gemini instantly felt himself fill with dread.

He reluctantly picked up his phone and turned the screen on. On the lock screen, he saw a flood of frantic Line texts from Fourth.

"Oh shit."
"I'm sorry."
"Gemini, please don't hate me."
"I swear I didn't mean to take advantage of your drunk state."

Gemini frowned. This wasn't the reaction he'd expected. Not that he'd had any real expectations, but this definitely wasn't it.

He opened the app and typed, *"Why are you apologizing? You were drunk too."*

A few seconds later, a response popped up. *"Still. I should've acted better."*

Had last night's kiss been a spontaneous drunken mistake for Fourth? Did this mean he regretted it?

"I'm sorry too. I'm older than you, I should've been the responsible one," Gemini replied, the line between his brows getting even deeper.

Again, Fourth's answer didn't take long to arrive. *"Let's meet and talk about this face-to-face. I want to solve this."*

Gemini would rather eat his own slippers than face Fourth while he could still feel the ghost of the guy's fingers on his neck, grazing along his jaw and collarbones. He wasn't ready to fake indifference when his cheeks were now permanently tattooed in scarlet. He would do it eventually, in a few years, before retiring to his new Miami Beach house. Not yet, though. Soon.

"I'll be very busy these days." Gemini wrote and added. *"I don't have time. At all."*

"You are not blowing me off, are you?" Fourth asked.

But Gemini's thumbs were already about to catch on fire from the speed of his typing. *"I'll let you know when I have time! Have a great day!"*

He was a damn loser.

He could be. Whatever. At least he was a loser who was home and who was an adult. He didn't have to explain anything to anyone if he wanted to act as if he didn't exist in his own dorm room for the foreseeable future.

And, he did exactly that.

For the entire day on Saturday, he didn't do anything remotely constructive. He rolled around in bed for hours, watched YouTube videos, and scrolled through social media until his stomach started screaming for food. Then he ordered burgers and ate them for lunch while playing Tetris on his phone. After that, he called his mom and his big sister to chat for a while before binge-watching a muscle show on Netflix until very late at night.

He did all that, with many breaks in between to unvoluntarily think about a certain blond buzz cut and a warm breath, and soft lips, and sultry words… until he was back to mentally kicking himself and going back to ignoring the reality. He just wished life were fair and not every single thing in existence was about Fourth in a way. But the gods had strange ways when they created this world.

The next day wasn't much different, as expected. Gemini woke up, did more or less the same things, and wasted the whole day in bed until it was actually bedtime.

On Monday, one of his professors canceled a class, which Gemini took as a sign of fate and decided to skip the other two classes as well. He just wanted to follow his healthy home routine for a little longer.

Then, it was Tuesday. Gemini was a good boy, so he did go to his classes that day. He went to all of them, including the extra one-hour lesson that one of his professors had pulled last second. But he successfully moved in the shadows and ran back to his dorm as soon as he was free. He was nothing short of professional.

On Wednesday, he got a little too comfortable running away from the elephant in the room (he wasn't getting better, but the animal was getting tired). While he was in the middle of his lab, his phone buzzed in his pocket. Because his alertness was low, he expected a notification from one of his games. But when he pulled it out, it was a text from Fourth, saying he was outside the building and waiting for Gemini to come downstairs to talk.

Gemini read the message through the notification bar, and his mind instantly flooded with various plans to escape this meeting no matter what. Yet before any of them could even take shape, another text popped up: *"Don't even try to run away."*

"Or what?" Gemini mumbled to himself.

"Or I'll come to your dorm," Fourth said.

Gemini glanced around, completely scared out of his mind and half-expecting to see a blonde head. He couldn't see anyone but ended up typing, *"Okay."*

The rest of the class went away in a blur made out of nerves, and before he knew it, he was already a bunch of excuses deep to get away from William and his questions, and running downstairs.

As soon as he stepped outside, he saw Fourth sitting on the steps.

He took a few steps toward him and cleared his throat. “Why didn’t you wait inside? It’s hot out here,” he said casually.

Fourth’s head snapped toward him. When he realized Gemini had arrived, he quickly stood up. “I didn’t wait that long. It’s only been twenty minutes.”

“Why did you come anyway?” Gemini blurted out before he could stop himself. He wasn’t planning to say it aloud, but lately, it seemed like he had trouble controlling his own mouth. “I mean… because it’s hot and all…”

Fourth closed the gap between them and stood just a step away from Gemini. He was smiling now, back to his amused self almost instantly. “I came because I had to do something about this, or you’d avoid me forever.”

Gemini wanted to argue, but knew it would only make him look stupid. It had been four days of radio silence from his side. Of course, Fourth knew what was going on.

“Tell me what’s on your mind so we can fix it before it gets out of hand, okay?” Fourth spoke again. “It wasn’t that big a deal for me, and I don’t want you overthinking it either.”

Gemini couldn’t keep looking at Fourth’s face, especially when he was being so straightforward like this. He was talking about the heavy make-out session between them as if he were casually mentioning the latest football scores. At least have some small talk before pulling the trigger! Stop making Gemini want to run back upstairs!

“I’m not overthinking anything,” Gemini muttered as he lowered his gaze toward the steps beside them. “There is nothing on my mind.”

“Are you feeling embarrassed or ashamed?” Fourth insisted, completely ignoring Gemini’s weak refusal. “What is it that’s making you uncomfortable?”

Gemini shook his head. “I’m not uncomfo-”

“If you regret it, I can promise it will never happen again.”

That made Gemini look up. “I didn’t say that.” He took a second to swallow against the dryness in his throat. “You don’t need to promise… anything like that.”

Fourth’s lips curved into another small smile. “So you are embarrassed?”

Gemini started nibbling on his bottom lip. He really hoped it would get easier to talk to this guy one day. “It’s more complicated than that.”

“Tell me about it.”

“How are you so comfortable talking about these things?”

Fourth was surprised by the call-out, but he didn’t let it faze him. “Because, as I said, it’s not a big deal. It was just a kiss. We either move on and forget about it… or we keep doing it.”

Gemini’s cheeks caught the last part before his brain could, and they started tingling all over again. “What?” he said, suddenly out of breath.

Fourth spoke over him. “But if you have any other problem with it, we need to solve that first, because I don’t want you to feel uncomfortable around me.”

Gemini stared at him speechless for a few seconds. Then he finally asked, “You want to keep doing it?”

Fourth raised his eyebrows. “I mean, it wouldn’t hurt to do it at least once more.”

Oh.

Gemini felt his knees going weak for some reason. It felt like he needed something to hold on to for support, but he only had his bottomless confusion available for that.

“Why?” he asked in a small voice.

“Because it was good. I was drunk, but I meant everything I said that night. All of it.”

“Oh, my god,” Gemini whispered.

“There’s nothing to be embarrassed about,” Fourth tried to assure him with a little bow of his head, so they could maintain eye contact. “When two people are attracted to each other, it happens. Isn’t it natural?”

“But-” Gemini stuttered. “But… not me. I can’t like anyone.”

Fourth wasn’t having it. “You don’t have to like someone to feel attracted to them. Those are two different things.”

Gemini thought about it for a moment. It made sense, it did, but something still didn’t sit right with him. Maybe it was because he had never experienced it, or felt the need to, but he wasn’t sure how sexual attraction could exist without triggering romantic feelings.

“Is that what was bothering you?” Fourth asked, snapping him out of his thoughts. “You were confused because you thought our kiss went against your no-love policy?”

Gemini let out a small sigh. “Not this or that,” he mumbled between his pursed lips. “All of the above.”

Fourth’s eyes became two lines as he chuckled. “I promise I won’t drag you to the courthouse to register our marriage just because we kissed. I’m just saying… we can kiss more without any feelings involved.”

“We can?”

“Yeah, of course.”

“Are you sure? You don’t sound too sure.”

Fourth shook his head. “You are being cute, and I’d like to watch you more, but I have to go now. I have a class in a few minutes.”

Gemini stared at him.

So, Fourth reached over and pinched his cheek. “Don’t think too much about it, okay? We’ll figure it out.”

Then he leaned in and kissed Gemini on the cheek while still holding the other one.

After that, he was gone, but Gemini wasn’t sure when or how. He was too busy dealing with the goosebumps racing all over his body.

—

Gemini decided to listen to Fourth’s advice and tried to push the whole kiss episode to the back of his thoughts. If Fourth was sure it wasn’t that big of a deal, then it wasn’t. It wasn’t like Gemini was the only one kissing that night; it was a tango of two. Considering the fact that his partner of the night was a professional world champion in this kind of dance, Gemini had no right or reason to doubt his knowledge.

It didn’t mean he wasn’t still squirming in his seat and not talking himself out of hiding in the closet for hours, but he was at least not planning to immigrate to Mars anymore. It was a start.

After finishing school for the day and returning to his dorm, Gemini decided to check his game. Of course, he hadn’t left his farm unattended over the past few days just because his evil twin had done embarrassing things. He had just logged in very late at night, so Fourth wouldn’t catch him by any chance. They’d missed a few days’ worth of dates, but Gemini figured that their real-life “date” more than made up for it.

When the game loaded, Gemini found his character in the bedroom. He guided it to the living room with the intention of leaving the house, but then he noticed something in the kitchen: Fourth’s very pregnant character.

At least she wasn’t barefoot.

She was offline, though, just idling there.

Gemini took out his phone and sent Fourth a text. *“Why is your character in my house?”*

Fourth answered a few seconds later. *“Why not? Can’t she spend time at her fiancé’s house?”*

“You left her here?”

“Yes, I was planning to ambush you there in case waiting in front of your faculty didn’t work.”

Gemini strained himself not to smile. *“We are not engaged yet,”* he wrote.

“And whose fault is that?” Fourth shot back.

“Sorry.”

“If you are sorry, eat lunch with me tomorrow.”

Gemini pressed his lips together as he stared at his phone screen. He realized he wasn’t as shocked by Fourth’s games as he used to be, and that thought felt strange, in more ways than one. *“Okay,”* he agreed anyway.

Fourth added with another text, *“I sent you Grilled Eel yesterday. Collect it from the mailbox before going to the caves.”*

“Really?”

“You’re surprised I learned how to cook it, right? Google says it’s the best energy and health-boosting food. I even went fishing to make it!”

Gemini glanced back at the game, at the pregnant lady in a pink dress standing in his kitchen, for a second. *“Don’t tire her, she is pregnant,”* he complained.

“She had to bear with me for my drunken sins for a while,” Fourth responded.

They chatted back and forth for quite a while after that. Fourth was at work, so he couldn’t answer right away, but Gemini broke rocks in the caves, closed the game, ate dinner, and did his homework, all the while texting about the most meaningless things with him. He even said good night before bed, and didn’t realize what he had done until he woke up to a “good morning” from Fourth.

The next day, when it was lunch time, Gemini found himself fighting with two things: uninvited butterflies in his stomach, and an uninvited William on his back.

“He is my friend too! I want to come with you guys,” the bigger intruder complained as he trailed right on Gemini’s steps.

Gemini played it cool, because he was cool. He didn’t care if William was coming or not. Not like he wanted to be alone with Fourth. No. Of course, he didn’t want to be alone with Fourth. Not for lunch and not for anything else. He was fine with William being there. “You might get bored, that’s all,” he said, very casually.

“Why would I be bored? I’ll just eat food!” William protested from behind him.

Gemini kept his expression straight, even though he knew William couldn't see it. "You don't know Fourth well enough, that's why."

"I know him enough to chew and swallow food," William insisted. "It's just food!"

They exited the building and made their way to the mall.

"Are you sure you don't want to eat with the student club?" Gemini asked, still very unbothered.

William stomped his foot, but kept following Gemini closely. "They are boring. Fourth is fun."

Whatever. Gemini didn't care.

They stopped at the traffic lights and waited for it to turn green.

Gemini took his phone out of his pocket to check for any new texts from Fourth.

But just then, William's voice cut through. "Oh, that's Fourth!"

Gemini instantly lost interest in his phone and looked up.

There he was, Fourth, on the other side of the road. But he wasn't alone. There was someone else next to him.

"Who's he with?" William asked the exact question racing through Gemini's mind.

Fourth stood there with a woman. It was too far to see her clearly, but she looked to be in her mid-thirties. She was holding Fourth's arms with both hands and looking up to him as if she was expecting him to agree to something.

It didn't take long for Fourth to shake his head, and that made her angry. She pushed him away, a little too hard, and he stumbled a step back. She then raised a finger and started speaking, more likely yelling, because it looked too intense to be a normal conversation.

Then the light turned green.

"Let's go," William said.

Gemini didn't move. Only when William grabbed his arm and started pulling him across the street that he reluctantly started following.

As they walked closer, the woman's voice became audible. Gemini still couldn't make out the words, but her tone was clearly sharp. It was obvious that she was upset at him for something, and he looked rather tired of her attitude as opposed to what she was expecting.

Gemini didn't want to go. He didn't want to know what was going on. He had this ugly gut feeling, and he felt like he and this situation belonged in entirely different worlds. But

William was dragging him along like he weighed nothing, pulling him straight into a scene he had no intention of entering.

The only thing Gemini could catch clearly was, “So you hate me?” from the woman.

Because right at that moment, Fourth spotted Gemini and William. His face shifted into an expression Gemini had never seen on him: a little too raw to understand and almost angry for some reason. He quickly grabbed the woman by the wrist and started walking toward them.

Gemini thought he was coming over to them. William seemed to think the same, because he raised a hand to greet him as they got close.

However, Fourth didn’t even glance at them. He held his chin high and his gaze straight ahead as he walked past them with the woman in tow. He crossed the street in the last seconds of the green light and kept moving without looking back.

Gemini stared at his back for a long time, trying to make sense of what had just happened. It was definitely Fourth, but he never felt this foreign, not even when they hadn’t known each other. What was that? What was going on?

William tugged on Gemini’s arm that he was still holding. “Hey, did you guys have a fight or something?”

Gemini watched Fourth’s figure shrink in the distance for a few more seconds before turning to William. “Not really,” he said honestly.

“Maybe it’s an emergency,” William said, clearly trying to rationalize this awkward situation. “He’ll come back. Let’s go in first.”

Gemini nodded, and once he made sure Fourth was out of sight, he followed William.

—

In the end, Fourth never joined them. He didn’t let them know about his whereabouts either.

They went in and sat down at a restaurant. Gemini felt too weird to text him after the incident, so after waiting about ten minutes, they decided to order and eat first. They still wanted to wait for him when they were done, but they ended up heading back to the faculty when it was time for their next class.

Hours passed, school ended, and the day was over just like that, with no contact from Fourth. Not even in the game.

The next afternoon, Gemini went to the student council to work on the website for a few hours. As he’d expected, Fourth didn’t come. Ping confirmed he’d attended the classes, but nobody knew where he was.

Gemini felt himself going back to square one. He'd just started feeling relaxed before this, and now he was freaking out again. He wanted to know if Fourth had disappeared because of him. He wanted to know if this was about their kiss. Or was that woman someone he wasn't supposed to see? Had he read the room all wrong? Had they not been that close? Had it all been in his head?

He had too many questions, and he didn't like the fact that he had them. He didn't want to care. He didn't want to reserve all his thoughts for this one man. This sudden invisible ice wall between him and Fourth was making his insides twist and turn, and he didn't want to feel that either. He was driving his own self crazy.

Then, on Saturday night, as he walked back home from dinner with his friends, his phone started vibrating in his bag. When he pulled it out, he saw the name he had been both expecting -and not expecting- to see.

Fourth.

He accepted the call and put the phone to his ear. "Hello?"

"Gem," Fourth's voice came from the other end, clear and casual. "Do you want to join me for a basketball game?"

Since when were they on a "Gem" basis?

Gemini looked up at his dorm building. "Will you even be there?" he asked.

Fourth fell silent for a second. "I'll be there, I promise."

"I don't think I can come," Gemini said with the determination he'd saved for the last few days and resumed his walk toward the gate. "I'm tired."

"Gemini," Fourth called again. "Please. Just one match."

Gemini felt the corners of his lips curl down. "You should stop inviting me to places."

"No-"

""Like, what's the point if you won't be there?"

"I'm sorry," Fourth murmured.

Gemini stopped in front of the doors.

Fourth continued, "We've known each other for only a few weeks, and I already owe you so many apologies. Please come join me so I can give them to you face-to-face."

"Are you sure you want me there?" Gemini asked, just to be completely clear.

"I don't want anything as much as I want you here," Fourth replied, without missing a beat.

Gemini stared at his own reflection on the glass. He was one step away from saving face and his pride, but he looked like he was already about to take off.

“I’ll be waiting here,” Fourth said.

And, Gemini went.

What else could he do? He was weak, and he was probably a loser.

On the way there, he kept telling himself it wasn’t that bad. Everybody had their off moments, and anybody could behave like that if caught unguarded. He invented excuses for Fourth’s behavior without Fourth even asking him to, and Gemini knew it: this sudden mood shift had only happened because of Fourth’s call.

He was acting this way because Fourth had called him.

And that wasn’t healthy at all.

He knew it, but he still went.

He reached the court they always played on and walked in with quick steps. He didn’t know what was waiting for him inside; maybe apologies, maybe reasons, or maybe indifference, or friendliness, or maybe even some flirtiness. But whatever it was, he wanted to face it as soon as possible. The suspense of waiting was killing him already.

When Gemini stepped inside, he was met with Fourth’s running figure. He was dribbling loudly across the court as he made his way to the basket, jumped high, and slid the ball in with a rough push. He landed back on the ground and watched the ball bounce on the ground, his face unreadable.

Then, he turned around as if he sensed Gemini’s arrival.

Gemini didn’t call out to him. He didn’t wave. He just started walking toward Fourth.

But right then, something he hadn’t expected happened. Fourth also started walking to him.

Not like what happened on the street that day, he didn’t walk in his direction, but directly to him.

Gemini’s steps faltered. Fourth’s didn’t.

He closed the distance between them with big strides, his eyes locked on Gemini, as if nothing else existed in the world. As if nothing else mattered.

He came closer and closer, and as soon as he was close enough to reach out, he cupped Gemini’s face and pulled him in, crashing their lips together.

Fourth kissed Gemini. Not for too long, just enough to make Gemini lose his balance and clutch Fourth’s biceps for support. Just enough for Fourth to wrap an arm around his waist and press their bodies together. Just for them to become one again after a week of emptiness.

Their lips moved in sync, because who was Gemini to resist? Fourth's overheated body flushed against his skin, and the harsh breath from his run swept across Gemini's face. His presence surrounded Gemini and marked his soul in mere seconds. He made Gemini dizzy. So dizzy.

He tasted like mint and sugar and everything good.

His scent was intoxicating.

He was too good to be true.

And when he pulled back, his absence felt like an insult.

"I didn't really think this through," Fourth whispered, putting enough distance between them to let them both breathe.

Gemini blinked his eyes open, feeling like he'd woken from a dream. "What was that?" he asked, still dazed.

Fourth rubbed his cheek with his thumb. "What I wanted to do when I saw you on the street that day."

Gemini gave him a puzzled look.

No, he hadn't wanted to kiss Gemini. He hadn't even glanced at him! That was a lie.

Fourth sighed, as if he always knew exactly what Gemini was thinking. "I did," he insisted. "I almost always want to kiss you, no matter the circumstance."

Gemini felt like he couldn't think clearly when they were this close, so he removed his hands from Fourth's arms and pulled Fourth's hand away from his face before taking a step back and causing Fourth's other arm to drop as well.

"I can't lie to you, I am really affected by you," he spilled with the sudden surge of emotions, his voice raw. "I'm attracted to you, there is no doubt about it. But please don't play with me, Fourth. Don't do that to me."

"I would never play with you," Fourth replied immediately. "I'm always honest with you. You know that."

"Then tell me what you want from me," Gemini urged, tilting his chin slightly.

Fourth gave him a long stare, then slowly spoke, "I already told you. I want you."

"You want me," Gemini repeated. He tried hard to stay in the moment and process his words one by one.

"Yes," Fourth agreed in a heartbeat.

"So you want to…"

“I want to sleep with you. Yes.”

Gemini blinked.

What?!

What did that even mean?

Chapter End Notes

Sorry for the long delay.🥲 My mom is here for a long visit and I've been dealing with some real life things. I'll try to be quicker but I'm sorry in advance in case I can't keep my promise.🥲

Let me know your thoughts please, your comments are really important to me.🩷

Chapter 5: He Is Straightforward

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

"That was blunt," Gemini said in one breath. "I- I don't know what to say."

Fourth shrugged, though there was a hint of worry in his eyes as he watched Gemini's face carefully. "You wanted me to tell you what I wanted from you, and I told you exactly what I want."

Nothing unexpected from Casanova himself; he was really a pro at this. So smooth. So effortless.

Gemini placed a hand over his chest, hoping it would help him calm down. His heart was beating so hard that it felt like it might fly out of his ribcage. He could feel the erratic rhythm under his palm.

"You always manage to make me nervous," he muttered.

Fourth raised a hand but let it fall halfway before it could reach Gemini. "Can I hold you?" he asked softly. "Let me help you sit down."

Gemini nodded. He let Fourth wrap an arm around his shoulder and guide him to the benches nearby. He could've walked by himself just fine, but it felt good to be taken care of. Gemini didn't want to dwell on it too much, yet he knew deep down that he was still reeling from the kiss, his knees were a little weak, and his body leaned toward Fourth for support without him even realizing it.

When they sat down, their knees touching and Fourth's arm sliding down to the middle of Gemini's back, Gemini shot him a quick glance. "You weren't this gentlemanly when you kissed me just now."

In response, Fourth gave him a sheepish smile. "Sorry. I thought you wouldn't mind it."

Gemini's lips slightly jutted forward. "I didn't mind it."

The hand on his back flexed for a second, then the thumb started moving up and down, in very small motions, almost feathery.

Gemini wanted to hold his breath, but because he was already nervous, he thought he would pass out from the lack of oxygen in his brain. Even though he was a certified loser, he still didn't want to look that foolish, so he let his air intake be.

He knew this was supposed to be Fourth's way of trying to help him relax, but he'd never felt further than that. He was the textbook description of the word 'tense'.

“Gem,” Fourth called softly. “What I said was just my wishful thinking. We don’t have to do it. We don’t have to do anything. Don’t feel like you have to oblige just because I’m open about it, okay? You know you can always reject me. Any time.”

Gemini looked at him again, but straight on this time.

So Fourth caught him in another intense eye contact. “I don’t want to ruin what we have. We’re still going to have a baby and make a new website.”

“You don’t sleep with guys,” Gemini blurted out before Fourth could even finish his sentence.

Now, what was that?

What the actual hell was that?

“Huh?” Fourth froze, his thumb and all included.

Gemini raised a hand and started smacking his lips with his fingers. *This damn mouth and its useless software!*

“What do you mean?” Fourth pressed.

Gemini closed his eyes and covered his mouth this time.

He, too, didn’t want to ruin what they had, but he didn’t want the previous options either! He didn’t want to shelve the ‘sleeping together’ talk. He wasn’t ready for that. He didn’t know how it would even work, he didn’t know if it would make sense at all, but he just didn’t want it to be a rejected idea. Not just yet.

However, he was too embarrassed to admit this, not out loud, not even mentally, so talking about a completely different thing -in this case, Fourth’s preferences- and deflecting the talk for a moment was the way to go in his way of acting.

After a few seconds of an internal TED Talk session about not behaving like a ‘ten-year-old with a crush on his English teacher’, he finally turned to Fourth. “I mean, I didn’t think you were into men. You are always seen with girls,” he explained, nice and slow.

Well done. Good boy.

“Oh,” Fourth stretched the word to the sky, indicating he understood what Gemini was saying. “I don’t mind the gender, I just like pretty things.”

“What do you mean?” Gemini asked, stupidly.

Fourth gave him an unbothered smile. “Girls are usually prettier, so I hang out with them more.”

“Then why me?” Gemini asked again, still stupid.

Fourth leaned closer. “Because you are pretty. You’re the prettiest thing I’ve ever seen, actually.”

And just like that, Gemini fell into the trap he’d dug with his own hands. His mouth dropped open, and his eyes widened with shock. Had he mentioned he was stupid?

“It shouldn’t be that hard to solve, considering you’re a computer genius,” Fourth ended casually.

“I can’t believe you can say these things so easily,” Gemini whispered. He put his hands on his burning cheeks and pressed hard. “You are crazy.”

Fourth shrugged again and leaned back on the bench. He removed his hand from Gemini’s back so he could fold his arms across his chest, looking like the most relaxed man in the world.

Silence fell over them for a few seconds. Gemini was still trying to process what had just happened, while Fourth seemed deep in thought about something.

Then he finally spoke again. “I’m sorry about last Tuesday,” he said, suddenly serious out of nowhere. “And not reaching out for the past two days. I had to take care of something, and I couldn’t deal with… the pressure.”

Gemini dropped his hands from his face. “Was it serious?

A shadow passed through Fourth’s face, but he shook his head. “Nothing I can’t handle.”

Gemini was not too convinced. “Are you sure? Are you okay now?”

Fourth frowned as he stared at him.

Gemini continued, “Is there anything I can help you with?”

Fourth lowered his eyes, then looked away completely. “Don’t be like this.”

Now, it was Gemini’s turn to frown too. “Be like what?”

“I hurt you. You should be angry at me, but instead, you’re being the way you are and…”

“And?”

“And I want to kiss you again.”

Gemini felt like he’d been struck in the heart with an electric arrow. For the umpteenth time since he’d arrived here. “Fourth,” he mumbled, almost pleading with him to give this poor phi a break.

Fourth grinned big. “Think about what I said earlier and decide if you want to sleep with me or not,” he said quickly, and blatantly, before pushing himself up. “But in the meantime, I should use this energy somewhere else.”

Gemini followed Fourth with his eyes and looked up to his very energetic figure.

Fourth extended a hand to him. “Come on, let’s play basketball.”

—

Everything was fine until Monday. Gemini felt great, didn’t freak out, and even got a little used to the sudden flutters in his chest, as much as someone could after hearing they were wanted by the TikTok-infamous playboy of their entire school. Sure, sure.

With a new week and a new morning starting, he thought he would be absolutely fine.

However, William had other plans. Apparently, he’d been secretly scheming to drop a hot, bothered, and very much unfused bomb right onto his dear best friend’s lap, and Gemini had no idea about it.

“I invited Est and the other council members to our ice-breaking trip!” he announced excitedly during their class break. He was happy, giddy, and even proud.

Gemini was trying to find his herbal inhaler in his bag when all that happened, so he just looked up and gave William a blank look. “What do you mean?”

William’s eyes shone with joy. “They are really fun, I’m sure our club members will love them!”

“Wait, wait,” Gemini raised a hand to stop him. “Did you say you invited the council members to our student club’s trip? Am I hearing it right?”

William nodded eagerly. “Yes, I did! Am I not so smart?”

Gemini was horrified. He’d never been more distraught in his entire life, not once, not even when he’d had to get stitches on his head because he’d fallen from a tree and hit his head on a small rock, then run home with blood streaming down his neck.

He wanted to block his ears and start shouting “LALALALALA”.

His inner thoughts were probably written all over his face, as they always had been. So, seeing that, William lost his spark -only a little, though- and straightened his back. “What’s wrong?” he had the courtesy to ask.

“Why… would you do that?” Gemini managed to say out loud.

William looked a little confused now. “Because I’m in love with Est?”

This brat was ruining Gemini’s life because of his stupid little crush?!

Gemini wanted to slap him on the head, but talked himself out of it. Violence was never the answer. Not even when his friend was being… whatever he was currently being.

“Nobody falls in love eight times a year, William,” he said, narrowing his eyes.

“This time it’s different!” William, of course, argued. “I fell for him the second I saw him. He’s the love of my life!”

“Yeah, I’ll give it two months.”

“You are being mean!”

Gemini turned around to face him and leaned sideways on his chair. “Remember the barista guy from that café in Lido? That was last month.”

William opened and closed his mouth a few times before finally shaking his head. “I never said he was the love of my life.”

“You did, and you even proposed to him.”

“That was because he didn’t think I was a serious person! I had to show him my sincerity.”

Gemini gave him a tight smile. “Exactly.”

“It doesn’t matter!” William protested. “I love Est, and I want us to get closer. I have to use every opportunity I can!”

“You didn’t have to invite the whole council for it!” Gemini shot back, raising his voice just as much. “Why didn’t you invite his entire bloodline while you were at it?”

People turned to look at them because of the noise, but they were already used to how Gemini and William were, so they didn’t pay much attention.

“I wanted to be smooth! I can’t just invite him alone!” William exclaimed.

“Why not? It can’t be more mortifying than proposing to a guy you’d met three days ago!”

“I hate you!”

“I hate you more! Do you even know what I have to go through now because of your new love affair?”

That made William stop in his tracks. He blinked. “What are you going through? Did they do something bad to you?” his voice suddenly very calm.

Gemini turned back to face the board and crossed his arms. “It doesn’t matter.”

“Oh, come on, tell me,” William urged with his hands now on Gemini’s arm and shaking him left and right. “I’ll go beat their asses if they hurt you.”

“They didn’t hurt me,” Gemini said, although his cheeks started catching flames regardless. “It’s not anything like that.”

“Then what? What is it?” William insisted.

Gemini tried to shrug him off. “It’s just… I'll have to be responsible for them for the whole trip. They’re kind of connected through me and all.”

“I don’t believe you,” William replied.

But right then, the professor walked into the class.

“It’s true,” Gemini whispered.

“I’ll be watching you, Khun Norawit,” William whispered back.

After that talk, Gemini had to forget about the whole ordeal, or force himself not to think about it, because in that very same class, the professor assigned everyone to group presentations for the following week.

Gemini was chosen as the researcher for his team (since he sucked at public speaking and wasn’t quick enough to snatch the PPT designing role). From that moment on, it became the most important thing in his life, because the professor said the results would count as their midterm points.

So, after a week and a half of spending hours in the library going through countless theses and research papers, then going home to summarize everything into coherent paragraphs, his brain melted into a mush. He still went to the council to work on the website for a couple of days, but could only stay for an hour and then run back to the library again to bury himself under books.

In between all that busyness, days chased one another, and the presentation day came and went in a blink (the most painful blink, nonetheless).

And before he knew it, it was already Friday evening, he was on the bus with his student club, seated by the window near the back of the vehicle, staring into the void and missing the days he had a functional soul.

So obviously, he didn’t know he was being hunted.

“Here you are,” he heard a soft voice coming from his left side.

His gaze moved from the window, more like its surface smudged with greasy fingerprints, to the handsome blond man towering over him.

And what a man he was…

He was, simply, gorgeous.

Yes, Gemini was probably going to kick his blanket over this thought at night, but when he was so out of it like this, when he was stripped down to nothing but instincts and needs by numbers and data results, he couldn’t help but appreciate it when something so beautiful appeared in front of him. It was almost like seeing the sun after a raging storm.

“Fourth,” he said out of reflex. Thankfully, it was just a whisper, because he absolutely sounded like he was seeing the god of love and desire.

It was inevitable, considering what this man looked like. He wore a simple, loose white short-sleeved shirt and dark blue baggy jeans, his ears adorned with shiny silver cuffs and a stack of thin silver chains around his neck. His hair was freshly cut and bleached, and his brow slit now down to one. He looked, and truthfully smelled, amazing.

“Hi,” Fourth greeted him with a wave, then pointed at the seat next to him. “Can I sit here?”

Gemini quickly nodded and lifted his bag from the seat, setting it on the floor.

“I’ve been looking for you forever,” Fourth finally said once he was settled.

Gemini was surprised, and it was an impressive feat, considering how his current state allowed him very few basic emotions. He gave Fourth a look that probably made him seem like he’d had a liter of Botox injected into his face. “You were?”

Fourth nodded, the corners of his lips twitching. “I was.”

“Then why didn’t you call me?”

“It wouldn’t be fun like that.”

Gemini frowned, at least he thought he did. “That doesn’t make any sense.”

“It does. I’m not in a position to contact you first after everything,” Fourth explained as if talking to a toddler. “And you haven’t shown me your face in forever. How could I know if I’m bothering you or not?”

“You don’t bother me,” Gemini answered instantly.

“Then why were you avoiding me again?”

Gemini was a little offended. “I’ve been busy with the presentation. Also, I’ve been to the council three times. You weren’t there.”

Fourth’s face finally broke into that smile he’d been fighting against. “Did you want me there?”

Gemini turned his face toward the window again. “That’s not what I said.”

“But did you?”

“Not going to answer.”

Fourth started chuckling, and even though Gemini could barely function as a human being, he couldn’t stop the smile on his own lips at the sound.

Not long after that, the bus started moving, and the hum of the engine felt like a lullaby to Gemini's soul, adding to the unexpected comfort he felt from being in Fourth's close orbit. It wasn't the feeling of being used to something, but more like finally being able to have it around. Not that he'd needed it, but he enjoyed its existence now that he could be with it.

He tried to keep his eyes open a little bit more, at least until they made it out of the traffic near the school, so he could experience the joy of going on a trip with his friends and have some fun, but his vision was already swaying. He clenched his fists and bounced his knee in hopes it would keep his body alert.

Yet, after a full minute of waging war against the sweet pull of sleep, he felt a warm hand softly land on his right cheek, and he was pulled onto a shoulder.

Fourth didn't say anything, but from the way he adjusted his sitting position to make Gemini more comfortable, the message was clear: just sleep.

As always, he was able to read everything.

Gemini didn't even have the energy to talk himself in or out of it, so he just closed his eyes, smushed his cheek onto the white shirt, and fell into the darkness in mere seconds.

—

His sleep was so deep that during the whole ride, he only woke up a few times.

One of those times was when a loud noise came from the front of the bus. It sounded like Winny had found a microphone, and the student club members were losing their minds over whatever he was singing. Gemini opened his eyes for just a second, and just seeing Fourth's hand resting on the inner side of his knee was enough for him to faint back to sleep again.

The second time was spontaneous, but from the silence in the bus, it was obvious it had been hours since they'd departed, and he'd been a dead weight on this poor boy's shoulder forever by that point. He was probably having cramps from Gemini's heavy head. So Gemini lifted his head, only to see Fourth completely asleep, leaning back in his seat, his mouth slightly ajar and long eyelashes fanning his cheekbones, as if he wasn't already pretty enough. Gemini ended up pulling him onto his own shoulder to repay his debt, not for any other reason whatsoever, and went back to sleep with Fourth now snuggled into his neck.

The third time was when they entered the road leading to their resort. It was a god-given talent; he had always woken up when a trip was about to end, ever since he was a kid. So when he opened his eyes, he realized two things: a zip-up sweatshirt on his lap, and a very awake Fourth next to him, playing on his phone.

"Are you trying to one-up me?" Gemini tried to tease him as he pulled the sweatshirt higher over his stomach.

The bus was freezing. How low was the air conditioner set?

After hearing him, Fourth turned to look at him. “One-up you? About what?” he asked with a glint in his eyes.

“About being a gentleman,” Gemini answered, though he couldn’t help but let out a yawn at the end.

Fourth raised his eyebrows. “Not really, but I’m glad I have a good image in your eyes.”

“Hey, again, I never said that!”

Fourth started laughing again.

Gemini shot him a dirty look.

“You looked cold even after I tried hugging you, so I pulled out a sweatshirt,” Fourth explained casually.

He… tried… doing what?

“Huh?” Gemini muttered.

And then the bus came to a stop.

The student club leader stood up and shouted, “Everybody, collect your stuff and gather at the front in ten minutes! I’ll handle the check-in and hand out your room keys.”

Gemini and Fourth’s conversation fell through after that, and Gemini realized he was never going to know whether Fourth had really hugged him while they were asleep or not. He pushed his bottom lip out and reluctantly picked up his phone, the sweatshirt, and his unopened bag, which he’d had snacks in that he’d planned to eat on the way, but hadn’t even touched. Once he was done, they followed the others out.

In the end, Gemini ended up having to share a double-bed room with William. He wasn’t too happy about it, but at least William slept like a corpse -no noise, no movement- so he didn’t really have much to complain about. After dropping their bags in the room, they quickly went downstairs again to go out and find food. It was already past ten, and they were starving.

When they arrived at the lobby, the whole student council team, except for the first-years, along with a few people from the student club who had apparently started absolutely adoring the outsiders on the way here, were already waiting there. When William and Gemini joined them, they quickly stood up and dragged them out of the hotel with loud complaints about how hungry they were, how they were about to die, and how they were waiting for too long (it’d been only twenty minutes).

The group started walking out of the hotel’s street toward the lights, knowing they’d probably find something along the way. The weather wasn’t too hot or humid, so it was nice to be outside. Everyone was chatting, cracking silly jokes, and laughing. It felt good, and since it had been a while since Gemini had been around a group this big, he almost thought William had made a good call by inviting the council members.

But then, his eyes fell on Fourth's back.

The guy was walking ahead of the group, but he wasn't alone. He was walking with Mint, one of the only five girls in their student club, and the only one who'd joined them tonight. Gemini had no idea when they'd met or when they'd gotten close enough to walk together, but they seemed to be… having fun.

Fourth was saying something, and Mint was laughing at it. Then Fourth was saying something else, and the girl was hitting on his arm. Back and forth.

Gemini stared at them for a few seconds and simply decided William was still a moron.

No, he didn't want to elaborate on that.

Instead, he decided not to pay attention to any buzz cuts and mingled with a few of his other friends so he could join their conversations. He spent the rest of the walk fighting the urge to look over at Fourth, and winning every single time, because he was a strong-willed man. It also helped that he positioned himself in a way that there were people between him and where his eyes wanted to focus, so he was safe.

Thankfully, the walk wasn't longer than ten minutes until they found a small Kaprao stall. They cheered seeing the sight of it and quickly filled the small red plastic tables.

However, by the will of the gods, by fate and everything above, somehow and some way, Fourth ended up sitting next to Gemini.

Gemini didn't complain out loud or show how completely floored he was. He just looked around to see if there were any other empty seats, but it seemed like not only were all the tables full, but some people didn't even have chairs, and the owner was trying to borrow extras from nearby stalls.

Well, maybe eating with Fourth was better than eating on the sidewalk.

"Are you trying to run away?" Fourth threw it out there, almost like he wasn't talking to Gemini.

There were three more people at their table, all club members who only knew Fourth from TikTok and from Gemini's infamous search for him, so Gemini decided to ignore the question.

"What are you going to eat? I'll order it with mine," Fourth spoke again.

"I'll order it myself," Gemini responded in an unintentionally stubborn fashion.

Fourth gave him a confused look. "Why? I can order it for you."

At the same time, William yelled from in front of the stall. "Hey, Gem! What do you want to eat?"

Gemini turned around. "Pork, not too spicy," he shouted back. "And water."

“Same for me,” Fourth added. “Thanks, man.”

William gave him a double thumbs-up. That traitor.

After a little while, their tablemates left to order their food as well, and suddenly, Gemini was sitting alone with Fourth.

This wasn’t what he’d planned at all. He should've gone to order his own food!

Fourth watched Gemini’s profile for a moment, as if contemplating the situation, and then asked, “Are you upset with me?”

Gemini let the question marinate for a few seconds before shrugging like a stubborn three-year-old. “Why didn’t you sit with your new friend?” he asked back.

Fourth leaned over, trying -and failing- to catch Gemini’s eyes. “I am sitting with my new friend. You are my new friend.”

“You have newer friends,” Gemini said, still looking toward the horizon.

“Gem,” Fourth called flatly. “Who are you talking about?”

Gemini gave him a side-eye. “I know you said you liked pretty things, but I didn’t think you’d go after all pretty things.”

Fourth kept staring at him, blank. “I’m not going after anyone other than you.”

Gemini just gave him a sarcastic nod that said, *I don’t believe a word of it*. He hadn’t even known he was capable of sarcasm against Fourth.

“Who’s this pretty thing?” Fourth insisted.

“So you can go after them properly?” Gemini shot back.

Fourth turned his whole body until he was facing Gemini completely. Then he took Gemini by the shoulders and guided him around as well, until they were sitting knee to knee.

Gemini tried to glance around to see if anyone was watching them, but Fourth caught his cheeks in his hands.

“What are you doing?” Gemini hissed.

Fourth looked straight into his eyes, still holding his face without disturbing his dear glasses. “Who are you jealous of? Why are you upset?”

“I’m not jealous,” Gemini tried to argue through his squished lips.

“Who is it?”

“No one.”

“Gem.”

Gemini sighed, twice, before finally giving in. “Isn’t Mint pretty? You guys were so friendly on the way here.”

Fourth faked an expression like he was thinking hard about it. Then he said, “She’s pretty, yeah.”

Gemini immediately started pushing his hands away.

Fourth quickly dodged the attack and put his hands right back on his cheeks. “But I’m not hitting on Mint.”

“Then why were you so cozy with her?” Gemini asked as he held onto Fourth’s wrists.

Fourth leaned back with a grin. “I was just catching up with her. She’s my classmate from high school.”

Gemini blinked.

Fourth started laughing.

Gemini pulled away from his hands again and turned to the table.

Fourth laughed even more.

Then William pulled up beside them with two paper plates of food and two bottles of water tucked under his arm. Right after him, their tablemates also returned with their food.

The three of them kept chatting among themselves, while the other half of the table stayed dead quiet. Fourth was probably still wearing that cocky smile of his as he ate, but Gemini was burning from head to toe with embarrassment.

He kept finding himself in situations where he wanted to run toward the mountains barefoot, with the expectation that a giant cobra would eat him and end his misery.

Once everyone was full -some with food, some with dread, and some of themselves- they got ready to walk back to the hotel and collapse for the night.

This time, on the way back, Fourth was walking glued to Gemini’s side instead of his high school bestie, and it was awkward as hell.

“Am I behaving correctly as a person who’s only hitting on you?” Fourth asked in a sing-song voice, being the complete menace that he was.

“Shut up,” Gemini whined.

“I’d hold your hand too, but I’m scared you’ll run back to the hotel screaming,” Fourth continued.

For some weird reason, the mere idea made Gemini’s insides go warm and mushy, but he furiously shook his head to chase away whatever that feeling was. “I get it, you weren’t trying to get into her bed.”

Fourth ignored him. Gemini only realized this because a second later an arm sneaked around his waist, and he was suddenly pulled to a firm body as they were still walking.

“Fourth,” Gemini protested in a whisper. Thankfully, they were way behind the rest of the group, so nobody was paying attention to them.

“I’m only interested in one bed,” Fourth answered belatedly. “And a guy called William will be in it instead. I have no luck.”

Gemini’s face turned purple in a second, his expression absolutely scandalous. “You are so straightforward!”

“And that’s the only thing I want straight with you,” Fourth answered cheekily.

Gemini swallowed a yelp. “You’re going to kill me one day,” he muttered.

Fourth gave his waist a squeeze. “Of fun?”

“Yeah, of course.”

Chapter End Notes

> The timing was off but she is not the Mint from Gemini's MV, she is the one from Fourth's😂 she is Mabelz

Chapter 6: He Is Happy

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

"Sleep," William whined, kicking his feet on the mattress for maximum effect. "The sun is almost up, Gemini!"

Gemini gave his friend a dirty look in the dark, knowing there was no way he could see it, but hoping he could feel it. It wasn't like Gemini wanted to stay awake! He wanted to sleep too! But partly because he'd slept for so many hours during the bus ride, and mostly because there was a weird restlessness low in his stomach, he couldn't fall asleep no matter how hard he'd been trying.

"It's only three," Gemini argued.

"In the morning!" William shot back. "Either knock yourself out, or I'll throw you off the balcony. I can't sleep because of your tossing and turning!"

Gemini huffed loudly and turned his back to his friend.

It wasn't Gemini's fault. It was just… whenever he closed his eyes, he would feel strong fingers on his waist, or on his knee, on his stomach, on his neck, gliding down. Then he'd end up remembering other things, like a certain weight on his lap, the taste of a pair of skillful lips, the long intake of breath whenever Gemini would respond to an initiative, or the way those muscles would flex under Gemini's touch.

Gemini didn't want his brain to turn into an illegal movie theater with all rooms playing blockbuster grown-up stuff. (Very, very grown-up stuff.) He wanted his brain to stay Patrick Star-level innocent, forever and ever. Sunshine, unicorns, and rainbows. Nothing eighteen plus.

Yet it was impossible when he had Fourth Nattawat and all his invasive, assertive, and overly attractive self in his personal space for this long. The guy was addictive. As he got closer, Gemini wanted even more from him, and he wasn't sure what the limit to that was. He didn't know how much he needed to take, or give, to satisfy this urge to reach out to Fourth. He didn't know how close they needed to get for him to finally feel content. And peaceful. And not so on edge, as if he couldn't bear to be in his own skin.

Or maybe he did know the answers, at least some of them, but he didn't want to associate himself with it. He felt shy; he felt embarrassed. He couldn't even imagine himself in that kind of situation. If his body followed his brain and didn't react the way it did, and had done in the past, everything would be great, and Gemini wouldn't be wide awake and in pain in the middle of the night like this.

Gemini forced himself to stay put in the bed as this gang fight went on and on in his brain. A few minutes later, William's breaths evened out next to him. After that, it took Gemini

another hour of pitifully staring at the dark walls to eventually fall asleep.

And the only reason he knew this was because, at one point, his movie theater was open for business without his control, and its movies were a big hit in the dreamlands.

—

The next day, Gemini could only join the others by lunchtime because that was the earliest he'd been able to open his eyes. He groggily ate his food, found a sunbed under the shade to lie down on, crossed his arms, and watched the kids play volleyball on the beach through his dark sunglasses.

All he needed was a sign above his head that said, *beware of the sleep-deprived boy*.

He didn't have his normal glasses on because beach sand was a killer when it came to scratching surfaces, and he couldn't put on his contact lenses either because they always fell out when Gemini tried to swim with them. As a person who'd had poor eyesight since early childhood, he was used to having blurry beach times anyway, and now, behind his non-prescription sunglasses, he could only see a bunch of human forms aimlessly running around on the sand. But this time, he was fine with it because he didn't want to try to pick out Fourth between those bodies. He'd picked him out from places enough last night, and it was quite sufficient. He didn't want to know where his main actor could be. Ignorance had never been this much of a bliss.

However, his happiness wasn't destined to last long. When was it ever, anyway?

"What are you doing here, Cleo Petra, her highness? Keeping an eye on your slaves?"

Gemini knew the voice better than he knew his own mother's name at that point, but he still jumped and quickly looked to his left.

Fourth was next to him, sitting on the other sunbed under his umbrella.

He was in a pair of bright orange swimming trunks, a beaded necklace, and literally nothing else. He was basically naked.

And unfortunately, Gemini's eyesight wasn't as bad as he hoped.

He thanked all the existing and fictional gods for the dark shade of his sunglasses and quickly turned his gaze back to the sea. "I'm just resting," he mumbled.

"William said you didn't sleep last night. Were you thinking about me?"

Now, Fourth had asked that as a joke, but he had no idea what kind of bullseye he just hit.

"What? Of course not," Gemini tried to play it absolutely cool. "Not at all."

That caused Fourth to fall silent for a moment, and that made Gemini glance at him from the corner of his eye.

“So you were,” Fourth stated as a matter of fact, humming under his breath as if he had made an important discovery.

Even though Gemini felt absolutely restless, he didn’t change his posture. “I was just not tired. That’s why I couldn’t sleep.”

Why was that son of a William running his mouth around anyway? Did he really have to tell Fourth about it? Why Fourth out of everyone?!

“You should’ve texted me. I’d keep you company,” Fourth said in a very casual tone, not teasing, not being funny. Just… being generous for his own benefit.

“I know the kind of company you offer,” Gemini responded, deadpan. Maybe it would be better if he gave his ideas another thought before speaking, but alas.

Fourth chuckled at that. “I offer any type of company you want.”

Gemini bit his reaction back.

So Fourth continued, “But do tell which type of company you want. I’ll do my best to accommodate you.”

Gemini wouldn’t confirm or deny anything for the sake of his own well-being, so he decided to skip this topic altogether. “Why aren’t you playing with the others?”

“You looked lonely here,” Fourth answered without missing a beat. “Leaving the father of my child lonely is the last thing I’d want. Especially knowing he had a hard time away from me last night.”

Gemini’s insides made a flip. He didn’t like the way things always went in a way that let Fourth find out what Gemini wanted to keep hidden. Whatever Fourth put his hands on, the right answer was under there. And at that moment, Gemini wasn’t terrified of anything more than his hidden cinema business being discovered by him as well.

Over his dead body!

He turned to look at Fourth. His intention was to rebuff the blatant accusation that he’d been ‘thinking about Fourth and having a hard time’ last night, maybe throw in a smartass comment or two, and then change the topic. But as soon as his eyes landed on Fourth, he instantly regretted his decision.

This guy… He was already eye-catching enough; did he have to wear those orange shorts on top of everything? Did he want everyone to look at him and nothing else? Spare the mothers! Spare the sisters! Why did he have to be so good-looking? Why did he have to have that perfect body? Why did he have to exist in the same place as Gemini? Why? Just why?!

Gemini had to be staring at him blankly for way too long, because Fourth ended up releasing a long, exasperated sigh. “That’s it, I have to stay here now,” he muttered before extending his legs on the sunbed and lying down.

Gemini shoved a hand into his hair and scratched his scalp in frustration. “You are so hard to communicate with.”

Fourth made an *uh-huh* sound. “That’s because you don’t want to tell me the truth.”

“That’s not true.”

“See?”

Gemini pushed his hand further in and started puffing up the back of his hair as well. “Maybe what you think is the truth is not the truth. Maybe it’s actually very false.”

Fourth tilted his head to the side. “You shouldn’t make your hair fluffy like that.”

“Huh?” Gemini said absentmindedly. “Why?”

“I don’t like people seeing you cute like that,” Fourth dropped, as if he meant nothing by it.

Gemini’s hand fell from his head immediately.

Fourth gave him a long stare. “And what I think is the truth is the truth. I’m certain of it.”

“And what is that truth supposed to be?”

“It’s the fact that you want me too, but you’re too shy to tell me about it.”

Gemini faced the other way faster than the speed of light.

Fourth started laughing.

“I’m tired, let’s just rest silently,” Gemini very kindly demanded.

“Okay,” Fourth agreed, still chuckling.

They spent the next couple of hours lying side by side until the sun moved low enough to peek from the edge of the umbrella. They did chat here and there, but it was more about mundane things, a little about the ongoing volleyball game, a little gossiping about people, a little complaining about the air conditioners in the rooms, and nothing about dangerous stuff. They also ordered and sipped on fuzzy mocktails, which were delicious.

Gemini hadn’t even realized how smoothly Fourth could make him comfortable enough to giggle about random things, even after working him up to the walls.

After the sun had completely set, Est -followed by his tail, William- joined them, and they went to the hotel’s restaurant to have dinner together with a few others. When they were done, they decided to go upstairs and join the fun at the pool.

Gemini actually ended up feeling the vibe of the party when they arrived. He got out of his t-shirt and actually got in the pool, despite not planning to. With all the people and movement around him, he felt a little dizzy without his glasses, so he stayed in one corner and chatted with whoever happened to be nearby.

Mr. Orange Pants, on the other hand, chose to hang out on the opposite side of the pool, sitting on the edge and flexing his abs… because why wouldn't he?

Gemini didn't glance to his side, at least not too often because he couldn't see clearly anyway, but for some reason, he could feel a pair of eyes on him at all times. He tried to act normal, he talked to people, laughed at their jokes, and swam around with them, but he kept feeling like there were a dozen CCTVs directed right at him.

Maybe half an hour passed like that before he finally decided he couldn't handle it anymore and that he had to do something about it.

He had two options: he could either get out of the water and run back to his room with his heels hitting his butt, or he could go close enough to see what Fourth was up to, and maybe tell him to stop doing whatever sorcery he was doing with his eyes.

Okay, ruining a perfectly fun night because of a stare wouldn't be smart, especially considering they only had two days there, so he started swimming toward where the orange lighthouse was positioned.

When he reached Fourth's legs, he crossed his arms on the edge of the pool beside him and looked up. Fourth was already watching him, of course, so their eyes met instantly.

"Fourth, you were staring at me," Gemini called him out without beating around the bush.

Did Fourth care? Of course not. He just gave him a sly smile instead. "How do you know? You shouldn't even be able to see me from that far."

"Because you bored a hole in my back. Look," Gemini said, pointing behind his shoulder.

Fourth's smile got bigger. "You can't blame me when you look like this."

Gemini looked at Fourth's happy face, his bright smile, perfect teeth, crinkled eyes, the way his body naturally leaned toward where Gemini was, added his atrocious words to the mix, and felt the air leave his lungs in a rush.

He felt like he was under a spell, and he was going deeper and deeper as he struggled to keep his head above the mist. There was a magnet between, a strong, heavy one, and it pulled Gemini to him without giving it rest, without giving him a chance to break free.

He itched to touch Fourth. He died to raise his hand and trace his fingers against the boy's skin, wherever he could reach. He wanted to align his body next to him, hold him close, and share the same heat, the same space with him. He wasn't sure what exactly it was that he wanted, but he wanted it anyway.

"Oh, no," he whispered to himself.

Then he watched as Fourth's smile fell.

"I should go," he said and took a step back in the water.

"Gemini," Fourth tried to say something.

But Gemini was already on his way out of the pool and then back to his room.

—

He was screwed. He was so damn screwed, and he had no idea what he was supposed to do now.

Fourth was right. Of course, he was. When wasn't he right anyway?

Gemini wanted Fourth. Plain, simple, clear as day.

After he ate up the steps of the hallway and fought with the door for a few seconds, trying to make the keycard register with his shaky hands, he finally slipped into his room, distraught. His chest rose and fell rapidly, his eyes darting everywhere but not really seeing anything, his knees weak. He felt like he was standing on the edge of something dangerous. Like he was about to do something he wouldn't expect from himself. Again.

He felt his evil twin awakening, and he wasn't even drunk this time.

He patted his own cheeks to wake himself up and pushed away from the door. He needed to shower. He had to have a good talk with himself under the water and clear his head. This was not good. There was no way this delirious state of his would lead anywhere healthy. He quickly got rid of his swimming trunks and threw himself under the cold stream.

First, he did nothing but wait for the fog in front of his eyes to dissipate. A few minutes later, when he found himself still mentally and physically thinking about Fourth, he remembered he was living in Thailand, and showers in this country could never be cold enough for horny freakouts. So, he ended up standing under the lukewarm water (at least the water pressure was strong), shamefully defeated, his mind still racing, his chest burning, and somewhere down there aching.

A while later, fresh out of the shower with his hair wet on his forehead, a bathrobe wrapped around his body, and thin hotel slippers on his feet, Gemini was back in the main room, pacing back and forth. He attempted to text Fourth to invite him over because he was at that level of crazy at that moment, but thankfully, he had forgotten his phone downstairs with half of his stuff when he ran back to his room, so he couldn't do what his impulsive thoughts wanted him to do.

Maybe a cup of coffee would help him, maybe an uninterrupted long night's sleep, or maybe going for a walk around the hotel… but before he could decide which one to try first, he heard it.

The knocking on his door.

And he knew who it was.

His heart leaped up to his throat, but Gemini didn't even wait for the sound to repeat before he hurried to open it. He hung on the door handle with all his might and swung the door open.

Then, there he was.

Fourth, holding Gemini's bag up between them, and concern written across his face. He looked like he'd showered and changed into his usual daily clothes, a basic black t-shirt and gray sweatpants, and he smelled amazing even from that far.

Neither his looks nor his smell was helping Gemini's condition, though.

"Are you okay?" Fourth asked, ending the stretch of awkward silence between them.

Gemini kept looking at him for a few more seconds, then raised his hand. He was supposed to take the bag, thank the guy, and close the door. At least he thought he wanted to do that. But, to both of their surprise, he ended up grabbing Fourth by the wrist and pulling him inside. He turned them around and closed the door behind with a soft thud.

He had no reason to do that, his rational side knew it, and from the look on Fourth's face, it seemed like he wasn't the only one with that knowledge. Yet, instead of feeling shame, Gemini felt even more brazen. Having done that, he wanted to do even crazier things now.

"You're not okay," Fourth answered his own question.

They were standing a step away from each other, Gemini still holding Fourth's arm and Fourth still holding the bag in his hand.

"I'm sorry," Gemini murmured.

Fourth inspected his expression for a moment. "Pulling me into your room while not wearing anything but a robe is not the sign you want to give me, Gemini."

Gemini nodded, a little guilty, a little embarrassed. "Um… I'm sorry about that, too."

"Okay, let's talk without holding each other first," Fourth said in a careful tone, placing his free hand on Gemini's hand to signal him to let go. "It might be better."

Gemini shook his head stubbornly.

"Gem," Fourth insisted.

Gemini's fingers tightened around his wrist.

"Gemini."

He finally let him go.

Fourth took a step back and slowly put the bag on the floor, as if he was facing a wild animal. “What is going on in your head right now? Where are you at?”

Gemini swallowed around the dryness in his throat. “Um…”

He was at one place, and the place had suspicious movie posters at the entrance.

If they did it once, just once, would he feel better? Would he be able to get this problem out of his system? Because he felt like he was never going to feel better until he got to be as close as possible to Fourth’s body in the near future. He was thinking phone-and-phone-case kind of close here. Skin to skin, face to face.

“Looking at me like that is not the sign either,” Fourth snapped him out of his thoughts.

Gemini eyed the distance between them. “Do we have to stand this far apart?”

“Yes. Until we agree on what we’re going to do.”

“Do we have to talk about it? Can’t we just… go with the flow?”

Fourth raised one eyebrow. “You want to go with the flow now?”

Gemini pushed his bottom lip out. “I don’t know how to talk about it.”

That made Fourth cross his arms on his chest. “Even though it’s killing me, pouting won’t help you. You need to use your words.”

Gemini pouted harder.

Fourth sighed in pain. “Just tell me what you want, and I’ll give it to you.”

Gemini lowered his gaze, his bottom lip still jutted out, and his expression almost pitiful.

“Well?” Fourth pressed.

“I… don’t know what I want. I just… I just can’t seem to stay away from you,” Gemini answered honestly, but toward the ugly hotel carpet.

“Gemini, look at me,” Fourth called.

So Gemini did what he said.

When their eyes met, Fourth asked, “Do you want to sleep with me?”

Gemini’s breath got stuck in his throat. “I do.”

Fourth simply nodded. “Then I’ll be yours tonight.”

Before his words could register in Gemini's brain, the distasteful distance between them was already gone. Fourth's hands were on the collars of Gemini's robe, and his breath was hot on Gemini's skin.

Then, they were kissing.

And Gemini feared he could cry from the pure relief he felt from having those lips on his again. Those soft, warm, skillful yet gentle lips… He'd missed the way they moved, the way they tasted, and the way they were so demanding in a form that made Gemini feel so wanted. He'd missed the way they worked together, with none of them trying to overpower, just sharing the moment and sharing a connection.

He'd missed it all so much that he wasn't sure what he was supposed to do without it anymore.

He wrapped his arms around Fourth's body, trapping the boy's arms in between, as if he could run out of his hold, and trying to hug him even closer.

This made Fourth take another small step, even though there was no more space between them, and slid his hands up until they hung on Gemini's shoulders.

Their tongues danced around each other, and the kiss deepened. Gemini was buzzing on the inside, his stomach doing happy flips, and his heart fluttering in his chest. It was perfect, it was everything he'd wanted, but at the same time, it wasn't enough.

He wanted more. He wanted to taste more, feel more.

He let Fourth's lips go with a gentle wet sound, then started peppering kisses on one of his cheeks, going up to his ear, and taking a deep breath right under his earlobe. He felt himself getting dizzy in the smell. His natural, musky scent with a hint of his shampoo… Almost intoxicating.

Fourth tilted his head to give him space, and Gemini took the chance to plant an open-mouthed kiss on the same spot.

Fourth's hands tightened on Gemini's shoulders at that. "Gemini," he whispered

No surprise, he tasted as good as he looked.

Gemini moved a little lower and kissed another spot. Then a little lower and another kiss, then one more, and one more. He felt a hand dive into his hair as he kept exploring, and the way it caressed him was so good he began to lose the last bit of his sanity. He made his way down, feeling a little eccentric and anxious not to miss any spot, until his lips brushed against the soft edge of Fourth's t-shirt.

"Let's sit down," Fourth murmured as he brushed his lips on Gemini's temple and gave it a small kiss.

He pulled out of Gemini's arms and guided him onto the bed, making him sit on the edge while he stood in front of him.

Gemini had no patience to be away from Fourth anymore, so he reached out and held the guy's thighs, something that seemed to please Fourth, judging by the little smirk on his lips.

"Do you want me to take this off?" Fourth asked, holding the skirts of his t-shirt and ever so slowly pulling it up.

Was he… teasing Gemini?

Gemini felt like he was suddenly about to have a heart attack. He'd seen Fourth half-naked half an hour ago, but he was acting like a man from the Middle Ages seeing an ankle for the first time, his breath hitching, and his eyes going dark.

He gulped visibly and loudly. Then nodded as a response, as if his stare wasn't explanatory enough.

The fabric rode up and up, revealing Fourth's milky skin bit by bit, making his abs enter the scene, and causing Gemini's mental stability to leave not only this room but this world altogether.

"Oh, you do want me, huh?" Fourth commented out loud, and there was genuine surprise in his voice.

Gemini just fisted his sweatpants in response. How dare he question Gemini's need for him when he was openly acting this desperate. "Please, Fourth."

"Please what?" Fourth asked.

"Please."

"Tell me."

Gemini's eyes left the t-shirt and traveled up to Fourth's face. "Please hurry up."

"Why?"

"I want to kiss you more."

Fourth looked away for a second. "I can't do this. You are too cute for my heart," he muttered.

He then took the t-shirt off his body in one go, almost as if it had offended him personally, and tossed it over his shoulder. He toed off his sneakers and pushed his sweatpants down, leaving himself in nothing but a pair of black boxer briefs. He didn't give Gemini any time or chance to ogle his body, though; instead, he nudged him further onto the mattress and climbed onto his lap, just like the day in Winny's condo.

When he was finally settled, he wrapped his arms around Gemini's shoulders. "Go on, the obstacle is gone now."

Gemini, with no other option, trapped under a breathtaking man in the middle of the bed, and a gorgeous body being offered just for him, obeyed Fourth right away. He put his tongue back on him and gave his collarbones a long lick, then started sucking on the skin under. He put a kiss everywhere he could reach in his position, leaving wet trails after his mouth. He tried not to leave bruises but still took whatever he could, while his hands roamed all over Fourth's back and sides, caressing and taking handfuls.

After a few minutes of free roaming, Gemini felt his head being guided back up, and when he obliged, he was met with Fourth's eager lips once again. The kiss continued from where they'd left off, just as deep and unrushed, but this time Fourth accompanied it with a subtle movement of his hips, thrusting in a way that ghosted a friction against Gemini's already way too painful erection, and almost killing him.

Gemini bit back a moan and tightened his hold on Fourth, which caused Fourth to do it again, only a little closer, but not close enough to make it better for Gemini.

Gemini kept kissing him, getting rougher, and letting whines slip out of his lips because that was the only way he could let the frustration out. Every time Fourth moved, Gemini got even more agitated.

In the end, Fourth drew his lips away and whispered against Gemini's mouth, "Impatient."

Then, he put his hands on Gemini's chest and pushed him onto the mattress. When Gemini was flat on the bedsheets, Fourth held the collars of his robe and parted them to the sides, wide enough to reveal his whole chest. He didn't waste a second before leaning over and peppering kisses all over his exposed skin.

He dragged his lips along the deep line in the middle of Gemini's chest, his tongue landing wet and heavy every time he decided to put an open-mouthed kiss somewhere in between. His touch was slow and intentional. It was burning, lingering, scarring, and left goosebumps in its wake.

Gemini could hardly keep his eyes open; his hand drifted up on instinct, grasping for Fourth's biceps just to steady himself.

Fourth took his time to inch lower and lower, and when he was right above one of the nipples, he asked, "Have you ever had sex before?"

What? Was this really the best time to have a conversation?!

The poor guy under you is fighting for his life! Have some mercy.

Gemini bit his lip nervously. "I had a girlfriend before."

He left out the part where they'd only done it two and a half times (one time hadn't ended the way they wanted).

Fourth hummed in acknowledgement, then placed a tiny kiss on the side of his areola.

And Gemini felt an electrical current go from his head to the tip of his toes. He sank his teeth harder on his bottom lip to keep himself in check.

“Have you ever had sex with a man?” Fourth murmured with his lips still on the skin.

Did he have to say the word *sex* out loud like that? Especially when he was on Gemini’s very own nipple?

When Gemini didn’t answer, Fourth put another kiss on the same spot. “Have you?”

“No.”

“Okay, we’ll take it slow then.”

Hearing that, Gemini blinked blankly and tried to raise his head. “What do you mean by slow?”

Fourth answered with a long lick on the nipple, and it caused Gemini to fall back in pure ecstasy, forgetting about the convo instantly.

Damn, he had no idea his nipples were this sensitive. It was a little embarrassing.

Fourth chuckled a little at his reaction, but didn’t comment. He, instead, took the nub between his teeth and twirled it around.

Gemini’s mouth fell open for a silent moan.

Fourth didn’t let the nub go for a long while, sucking and nibbling on it in turns. And when he finally released it, he made sure it made a deliberate pop sound before replacing his lips with his fingers. He straightened up and took in the expression of the boy he was currently torturing.

“I mean, we can’t go all the way today,” he answered, VERY belatedly.

Gemini whined once more, a little loudly this time, as a protest for whatever Fourth was saying and as a reaction to the fingers pinching his nipple. “Wh- why?” he tried to speak.

Fourth gave him a big, self-satisfied smile. That brat.

“Because I don’t want to rush your first time,” he said with emphasis on every word, knowing Gemini was having a difficult time understanding. He then placed his other hand on the other nipple and started giving it the same treatment while he slid backward on Gemini’s thighs. “And because we don’t have lube and condoms. We have to make do with what we have.”

Gemini had already lost the thread of the topic halfway through his speech, so he wasn’t even sure what that was all about. He could only focus on the attention his body was receiving. His back arched as Fourth’s mouth found his belly button and started kissing around it. Then his tongue dipped in, and Gemini could swear he saw colors he’d never seen before in his life.

“Fourth,” he called out loud, his body buckling because of the overstimulation.

“Yes,” Fourth answered from below.

“Do something,” Gemini cried out.

“Like what?”

“Anything!”

Just save me!

Thankfully, it did the magic. Because after hearing that, Fourth pushed himself upright and took hold of Gemini’s belt. He untied it and pulled the sides of the robe, revealing the rest of Gemini’s body, from head to toe.

His stare traveled down and fell on something right in front of him, something red, impossibly hard, and leaking uncontrollably. Something that was begging for attention.

“God, even your cock is pretty,” he said in awe. “Is there anything not pretty about you?”

And Gemini wanted to die right then and there, but he stayed alive because he wanted to experience what was coming.

After sex, now cock too?! He had such a dirty mouth!

“I’m sucking it,” Fourth announced for everyone to hear, only a second before taking it in his hand and leaning over to put his tongue flat on the tip, catching the last drops.

Gemini moaned so hard that he was sure the neighbor rooms heard him.

He took his words back, that mouth wasn’t dirty. It was the filthiest thing ever!

And Gemini loved it.

Fourth parted his unholy lips and took the head fully into his mouth, hot and wet and heaven and hell at the very same time. He gave it a suck, and swirled his tongue around the tip as if he was eating a candy. Then, in a very unhurried manner, he started pumping the length while pushing the rest deeper in his mouth.

Gemini lost track of time and space; he zoned out, his vision all white, his heart beating in his mouth and lungs out of air. His hands had already fallen on the mattress and were holding the sheets, his knuckles turning white. He was probably grunting, or crying at the same time, because his mouth was open and his throat was moving, but he couldn’t even hear himself because of the ringing in his ears. He was floating, he was losing his whole existence.

This was the very first time someone was touching his private parts, let alone putting it in their mouth -they had only done the main deed with his ex girlfriend- and he hadn’t known it would cause this much pleasure. He had thought people were exaggerating it when they

talked about things like this. He thought there was no way it would be much different from touching it himself. But it was.

Boy, it was.

Masturbation was absolutely nothing compared to what Fourth was making him feel right at that moment.

He felt himself hitting the back of Fourth's throat, and the way Fourth's cheeks hollowing to suck him into the deepest point he could manage, and Gemini thought this was the way he was going to meet angels and stars personally.

Then, when Gemini started feeling the warm build-up getting way too intense to bear, Fourth let him go, all wet and throbbing, and disappointed with the absence of the previous interest. He wiped his lips with the heel of his palm and climbed back onto Gemini's hips, sitting right on his erection.

Gemini let out a strained noise, something between a gasp and the sound of someone being stabbed.

"Now turn us around," Fourth ordered, leaning in to press a kiss to his chin. "You have to do the rest of the work."

Gemini frowned hard, trying to understand his words.

Okay… he could turn them around if that was what Fourth wanted.

He grabbed the boy's hips and pushed his own body forward, tumbling them over in one go. When it was him on top, they ended up in a position where he was between Fourth's legs, which were now bent on the knee and hooked on both sides of Gemini's hips.

Fourth moved around to get comfortable under Gemini's weight and pushed his hips lower. It caused his own erection to align with Gemini's exposed one through the thin layer of fabric in between. When he was happy with the position, he wrapped his arms around Gemini's neck and tugged him down.

"Move your hips, baby."

Then, he led them into another savory kiss.

Gemini loved nothing else like kissing Fourth, so it was easy to be lost in the kiss, but he still rolled his hips as instructed, both because that was what Fourth had told him to do, and because it was what his own instincts screamed at him to do. He felt Fourth's hardness right along his own, and the pressure was just too good to be real.

He pushed his hips forward again, and again, and by the next one, he was already leaving the timidness behind. He thrust against where it felt the best, and made a little rolling movement to make the burst of pleasure last too. He went back and forth, back and forth, until he got the gist of it.

Their kisses turned frantic, a little too sloppy and too uncoordinated. Hips met over and over, and frenzied breaths mixed into each other. It felt good, so good to a point it felt like the sin itself.

Yet, they were still too far from each other.

As Gemini rubbed himself up and down on Fourth, he grew more annoyed at the fabric between them. The boxers were very thin, but they were still there, and they were stopping Gemini from truly reaching Fourth. There was no need for them at the stage they were at… was there?

Feelings restless, he grumbled against Fourth mouth and blindly reached down. After feeling around a bit, he finally found the boxers and took hold of the fabric, quickly pushing them down. The elastic band went past Fourth's erection, and it sprang free into Gemini's palm.

Gemini rubbed his hand all over the length, and was a little surprised by what he felt. People weren't calling this guy Casanova for no reason, apparently.

Fourth let his mouth go and rolled his head back, a heavy exhale slipping past his lips.

"Gem."

Seeing this, his closed eyes, his open mouth, bruised red lips, the column of his pearly white neck, and the barely there pinkish love marks on his neck, Gemini felt like he could conquer the whole world. He felt like he could own the lands, command the seas, and rule nations. He felt like the most powerful human being.

He was a man after all.

He pushed the back of his hand on Fourth's navel and wrapped his fingers around both of their erections, and started thrusting again.

That was the most amazing thing he'd ever done with his own will in his life.

He pushed and pushed, with his own weight and hand trapping them into one cramped space, feeling each other and feeding each other. They both leaked onto his fingers, the constant fraction making the fever rise, their scent becoming one, more heated and more humid.

Fourth hooked his legs into Gemini's, and his hands roamed and grabbed everywhere until they found his ass under the robe, taking handfuls of his cheeks and kneading them. He didn't make a lot of noise except for his heavy panting, but his face was a mess. His cheeks were bright red, his pupils dilated and unfocused, his teeth pulling hard on his own lips.

Gemini kept kissing his neck and chest, anywhere and everywhere, and picked up his pace without even realizing. He went faster and faster until his wrist started going numb between them. He didn't let go, ground against the pain, and kept rocking, rubbing, sizing Fourth's length over and over again.

He went on, nonstop, even surprising himself with the way how long he held back the heavy twist low on his belly. It was strong and insistent, but Gemini kept pushing himself further.

He inhaled, exhaled, and his hips stroked even faster, almost out of control.

“Gem,” Fourth called out again, out of breath.

Gemini propped himself up to see him.

Fourth stared into his eyes, and whispered, “Come with me.”

Gemini wanted to say, *wherever you want*.

But he didn’t. Instead, he pulled his hips back and trusted hard, once, twice, and on the third one, Fourth’s eyes closed shut, and his back arched beautifully. Only a second later, he was spilling all over his belly and Gemini’s hand.

And Gemini followed him right after, hips still moving involuntarily, as if his body wanted to milk them both dry.

When he was finally out of strength, he collapsed onto Fourth’s body, letting all of his weight press down on him. They panted in each other’s arms.

Minutes ticked by as they lay in the same position, until Fourth chuckled beneath him. “You need to save yourself.”

Gemini had no power to lift his head, so he mumbled from where he was tucked into Fourth’s neck. “Hm? Why?”

Fourth raised his arms and wrapped them around Gemini’s back with a comfortable sigh. “I don’t think I’ll leave your ass alone for the foreseeable future. You’re going to need a plan if you want an out.”

Gemini pressed his face even closer to Fourth’s skin. *Plan? Out?* What was he even talking about?

Chapter End Notes

I was really sick for the past week, sorry for the delay. I hope you enjoyed it. Let me know what you think!🩷

Chapter 7: He Is Nice

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Gemini didn't even get the chance to freak out about last night when he woke up.

Because the first thing he saw when he opened his eyes was William walking into the room, so instead, he got the chance to freak out about being caught in the same bed as Fourth.

All the blood in his body rushed to his head as he turned his head to where the blondie should have been. When he couldn't see anyone, his eyes darted around the room, including the open door of the dark bathroom and the empty balcony, but thankfully -and confusingly- Fourth wasn't there.

"What's wrong?" William asked as he stopped in the middle of the room, watching Gemini's panicked state. "Don't be scared, man. It's just me."

Gemini looked back at William, but he didn't really focus on what he was saying. His thoughts were all over the place. He was relieved to be alone in the bed, but at the same time, he had no idea why he was actually alone in that said bed.

Where was Fourth if not in the room with him?

He remembered the two of them cleaning up after their long but messy cuddle last night, and Fourth picking something comfortable for both of them to sleep in from Gemini's bag. Then they'd spent a while lying in bed, chatting about random things between kisses, until Gemini eventually fell asleep on Fourth's arm.

And now, he wasn't on an arm at all.

"What time is it?" Gemini asked as he turned to lie on his back, rubbing his eyes.

Whatever, he thought, as long as he didn't give William something to make fun of forever and ever.

William, seeing his friend back to acting somewhat normal again, shrugged to himself and made his way to his bags. "It's almost ten. You have fifteen minutes to catch breakfast."

Gemini made a face. He didn't like eating breakfast when he couldn't get enough sleep.

William crouched down next to his luggage and started pulling stuff from it. "I slept in Est and Fourth's room last night," he said. "Their room has two double beds, can you believe it? It's so unfair when we have to share only one!"

"Oh, really?" Gemini asked, sounding almost interested.

"Yeah! But I'm not mad because it gave me the chance to sleep in the same bed as Est."

Gemini started thinking about where his phone could be. Was it still in the bag Fourth had dropped in the middle of the room last night? Why hadn't he thought about his phone the whole night anyway? The battery was probably dead by now.

"Why did you sleep in the same bed if they have two beds?" he asked a little absentmindedly.

William stood up from his bags with a t-shirt and a pair of swimming trunks in his hands. "What do you mean? Do you think I'd sleep with Fourth while my future husband was there?"

Gemini gave him a blank look.

William matched his look with one of his own, then started explaining with his hands while still holding the clothes. "There is Fourth's bed, Fourth sleeps in it. Then there is Est's bed, he and I sleep in it. Do you understand?"

Had Fourth slept in his own bed last night? When had he even gone back?

"Are you still asleep?" William asked, seeing his even more confused face. "Why are you so slow today?"

Gemini pushed himself up and sat on the side of the bed. "Whatever, I don't care about your bed positions, freak."

"Aw, aren't you being such a ball of happiness this morning?" William said in a sing-song voice as he made his way to the bathroom. Before he closed the door, he called out from his shoulder. "You have less than ten minutes for breakfast, sunshine. There is free coffee."

So, Gemini ended up catching the damn breakfast two minutes before they cleared out the buffet. That was the quickest he'd ever gotten ready. He'd put on whatever he could find, brushed his teeth, and because his hair was a mess after last night, he'd successfully hidden it under a cap.

He only took two pieces of what looked like croissants pressed in a waffle maker and slapped some Nutella on them. He also took three cups of coffee because their coffee cups were super small, and they were closing the machine as well. A guy's gotta do what a guy's gotta do.

People in the restaurant started leaving one by one after the buffet was cleared out, so by the time Gemini was almost done with his first cup, he was already alone in the whole place. The beachside was getting louder with kids meeting up and already starting to play around, and the sound of laughter made him crack small smiles here and there. Maybe he would join the fun today, maybe even swim in the ocean.

He felt an unusual surge of serotonin today, and he had no idea why. Weird.

Then, out of nowhere, a figure -who had nothing to do with those hormones- appeared next to the table and took the seat right across from him.

"Good morning, pretty."

Gemini looked up and met with Fourth's usual handsome and happily smiling self. "Morning," he answered, the ghost of the previous smile still on his lips.

Fourth casually gestured at the table with a hand. "Will these be enough for you, or should I make a run to the closest coffee shop?"

Gemini glanced at his cups. "They should be enough."

Fourth insisted. "You know, I'll do anything to feed my dear fiancé's addiction to thousands of cups of coffee in the morning."

"They are tiny!" Gemini argued with a huff. He wasn't smiling anymore. There was nothing to smile about in his life. "Not my fault that they withhold free coffee from their paying customers!"

"Hey, who dares give tiny stuff to Gemini? He likes it big!" Fourth faked an angry shout.

Gemini knew he wasn't supposed to think anything else about those words, but he couldn't help the blush crawling up to his cheeks. He quickly took his second cup and took a sip from it.

"It's okay, three tiny ones will make do for now," he muttered, lips still touching the rim of the porcelain.

Fourth put his forearms on the table and leaned over. "I'm sorry, I can't let you have three others at the moment, no matter the size."

Gemini's eyes opened wide, and the coffee in his mouth instantly went down the wrong way. He put the cup down and turned to the side, coughing uncontrollably.

Was he being for real? In the middle of a public place? With the workers possibly being around?!

Fourth stood up and made his way around the table, then started gently hitting Gemini's back. "Hey, it's okay. Don't die on me because of a dirty joke, please."

Gemini kept coughing, tears now forming in his eyes. "You owe me a large coffee after this, for real," he croaked out.

Fourth rubbed his back in slow circles. "I know you'd prefer it large after last night."

Oh, my god.

"Shut up, please," Gemini whined. Then, with still tears on the inner corners of his eyes, he turned around and looked up at Fourth. "Why do you not have any shame?"

Fourth gave him a smile, a big, warm smile that made his eyes turn into two little lines. Then, leaned over, held Gemini's chin, and kissed him right then and there.

It was only for a short second, but it was enough for Gemini to feel it in every single part of his body.

“Fourth,” Gemini protested, pushing the guy away from his chest, albeit half-heartedly. “I said, have some shame. People can see us.”

“There’s nobody here,” Fourth said as he straightened up. “And you make me shameless, what can I do?”

Gemini swatted Fourth’s hand away from his chin and scoffed. “I don’t do anything to you.”

“Not at the moment,” Fourth quipped without missing a beat. “I wish you were, though.”

Gemini gave him a dirty look. But deep inside, he wished the same. Maybe he should have some shame, too.

—

When Gemini was done with his croissant waffle and all of his coffee, alongside Fourth’s company and some thankfully not-so-dirty chitchatting, they moved to the beach. Fourth had to take a call, so Gemini put his bag, hat, and t-shirt on a sunbed, found William, and forced him to join him for a swim in the sea.

After a few laps and a few rounds of wrestling in the water -more like trying to drown each other-, Gemini got tired and decided to sit on the shore with his legs still in the water. William was still swimming back and forth, occasionally coming close to Gemini to splash water on him or to update him on whatever train of thought he was on, and occasionally challenging himself to reach the safety line without breathing.

He was only a little stupid.

Gemini was watching him closely so that moron didn’t kill himself before walking down the aisle to marry his future husband, as he’d said.

He only noticed someone had sat down next to him when they spoke.

“Hello, phi.”

And when he looked over, he saw Mint.

He’d never had a one-on-one conversation with her before, so he was initially taken aback seeing her. “Mint,” he greeted back, trying not to look awkward.

Mint smiled shyly. She was sitting three steps away from him, and from the look on her face, it seemed like she wasn’t sure why she was there either. It was awkward no matter what.

“I just saw you sitting here and looking lonely,” she said, a little hesitant. “I wanted to keep you company.”

Gemini needed a moment to realize he really had been sitting on the shore against the waves and gazing at the horizon all alone, as if he were in a sad music video. “Ah!” He quickly pointed to the sea. “I’m not alone! This dumbass- I mean, William is swimming, and I am keeping an eye on him.”

Mint glanced at William’s swimming figure and then back at Gemini. Her eyes widened in surprise. “I’m sorry, phi. I thought…” she trailed off.

“No, no!” Gemini cut in. “I’m sorry for worrying you.”

Naturally, the awkwardness grew three times bigger in the air.

Gemini used all of his power to act like a super casual phi and looked around, not wanting the poor girl to feel any more miserable than she was probably feeling right now.

“Phi,” Mint spoke again after a while. “I actually wanted to ask you something.”

She didn’t sound like she wanted to run away. Maybe not yet.

Gemini looked back at her. “Yes?”

“I- I don’t want to be rude, and you can choose not to answer if you want,” Mint quickly blurted out. “Is phi dating Fourth?”

Gemini felt like he was going to have another coughing fit, this time caused by his own spit, but he stopped breathing just in time so it wouldn’t happen. “What?” he managed to whisper.

She put her hands in a wai. “I’m sorry!”

“I- uh- we,” Gemini stuttered a bit. “We’re not dating. No, not at all.”

“You are not?”

“No. Why did you think so?”

Mint looked at a point behind Gemini, and he could only assume it was where Fourth was. “You two look really close. And then there’s… this,” she said, pointing there with her chin.

Gemini turned to his other side and glanced at Fourth, who was still on the phone after a whole hour and was currently staring back at Gemini. Intensely.

Yeah, well, Gemini had no idea what Mint was talking about. He turned back to her. “Let’s just say we spend a lot of time together,” he ended up saying.

Mint nodded, though it wasn’t clear if she was convinced or not. “I thought maybe he changed, but maybe he still has some of his old self.”

Gemini thought he heard a hint of sadness in her tone. An old kind of sadness, something that had settled into her like a fact she’d already accepted. He didn’t want to probe, because he

didn't like being in other people's business (unless it was silly gossip), but the way she put that sentence together practically begged for a few questions.

So he complied. "What do you mean?"

Mint gave him a look, silently asking if she could trust him, but if she came all the way here to talk about this, she probably didn't need too much convincing. A small eyebrow raise from Gemini was enough for her to spill it all.

"He was a little unapproachable in high school," she started with careful words. "It felt like he had walls around him. He wouldn't let anyone go near him easily. He would only talk to a few of us and would leave as soon as the class was over."

Now, that didn't sound like Fourth at all. The Fourth Gemini knew was a social butterfly, always active and surrounded by so many people. He had dozens of friends and even more 'special' friends.

Mint continued. "He said he lived with his mother and grandmother, and worked to take care of them. I don't know what happened later on, but he left the school during the last year. They said his grandmother passed away."

Gemini kept watching Mint, but his mind was racing all over the place. He suddenly felt like there wasn't a Fourth he knew, actually. He had no idea about any of this, and imagining him like that felt like seeing a complete stranger to Gemini.

"I had no idea about any of this," was the only thing he could say.

"I can understand, because when I saw him again here, I thought he was someone else! He looked and acted so different," Mint said. "His hair was always short, but now he's blond and has ear piercings. He's so talkative and smiles all the time. When I talked to him two days ago, he felt like a completely different person."

Gemini felt a line forming between his eyebrows. "But?" he asked, because he felt like one was missing there.

Mint sighed. "I hope it's real and he is genuinely happy now. Because he was really troubled back then, phi. I wouldn't want to see him like that again."

Gemini kept frowning as he looked down at his legs and the little waves carrying sand and seashell pieces onto his trunks. He had always felt some kind of distance between him and Fourth ever since they'd met, no matter what happened between them physically, but he had never thought of him as not 'genuine'. He didn't know what to make of any of this information.

"Back then, he was dead against love. He was very vocal about his disdain for relationships, and he would even leave if we mentioned our crushes," Mint said with a little chuckle. "So when I saw him with phi, I thought he had really changed."

Gemini looked back at her.

But Mint was staring in Fourth's direction again. "But maybe not. Not if he isn't in love even with the person he looks at like that."

—

The rest of the day was actually fun. Gemini played beach football with his club friends against a group of tourists, had burgers with everyone for lunch (the tourists paid because they'd lost), and took a nap in the shade when he was full (alone, thankfully). In the evening, they had some drinks, but it turned out that the main alcohol overdose event had happened last night… while Gemini had been busy with something else. Because it was already Sunday and they were supposed to leave before sunset in the morning, today they were only allowed a bottle of beer each (underage drinking was not photographed).

During all this, Fourth was always around Gemini, not really smothering him but never leaving him out of his sight for long either. He took countless phone calls from what seemed like the same person, and even though he stayed on the line for shorter and shorter periods each time, he still spent a considerable amount of the day with his phone glued to his ear. He didn't say who it was, and nobody pried, but whoever it was had to be important for him not to ignore even a single call.

After the drinks, everyone went back to their rooms early to pack and rest before the ride back, and after a short sleep, they were completely checked out of the hotel and on the road again at five a.m. sharp.

Even though William had decided to stay in his and Gemini's room last night, he would never pass up a chance to sit with his Est, so Gemini ended up sitting with Fourth again.

"No calls today?" Gemini asked a few minutes into the ride.

"No, I wouldn't let anyone disturb your sleep on my shoulder," Fourth answered, diplomatic and smooth as always. He then leaned over and took out a small blanket from his bag. "And you won't be cold either this time."

Gemini stared at the blanket in shock. "Where did you even find this?"

Fourth gave him a mischievous grin. "I have my ways."

The blanket was really soft and warm against the blasting air conditioners, and it made snuggling into Fourth's body even easier when they were both covered from the eyes of others. Given the hour, everybody fell asleep not long after they were on the road, including Gemini and his body pillow, Fourth, and his snacks were left uneaten once more because they only woke up when they were finally stuck in Bangkok's morning traffic.

When they arrived at the school, it was around nine, so most people were able to make it to their classes on time. For Gemini, his fuel was his sleep, and he couldn't function properly during the day without enough rest. He was absolutely planning to skip the first class, but thankfully, his Monday professor was busy with an overseas project and had been canceling a

lot of classes this semester, including this week. So, in the end, his classmates from the club ended up being the only ones who weren't dragging their heels, and they didn't skip the chance to rub it into everyone's faces.

As they were getting off the bus, Gemini was busy in his head, calculating how long he could sleep until his afternoon class if he took a bike and arrived at his dorm in about ten minutes. He was making a detailed plan to throw his bags in one corner, get out of his clothes, and jump into bed with his underwear as soon as he was in his room.

However, when they were on the sidewalk, Fourth caught him by the wrist before he could walk away. "Come, I'll drop you off," he offered.

Even better! Gemini could save himself the wait for a bike taxi and be in bed in eight minutes.

"Yes, please," he agreed in a heartbeat.

"You are so cute when you are obedient," Fourth commented cheekily and started walking with his hand still on Gemini's forearm, without waiting for a response.

Gemini wasn't planning to anyway. He didn't have the face to argue about that one, knowing how he'd acted on a certain night. "I'm your phi," he just commented in a small voice.

Fourth chuckled. "Right, right."

They walked onto the campus and headed to the nearest parking lot, where Fourth's dark blue bike was waiting in the corner.

Then, something happened.

Something unexpected.

It was so fast and happened so abruptly that Gemini didn't even realize what was happening for a few seconds.

First, a woman -whom Gemini later realized was the same one he'd seen with Fourth earlier that day in front of the mall- appeared out of nowhere and jumped in front of them. She was red in the face, looked absolutely furious, and was yelling from the top of her lungs.

She was mad.

"Is this the one?" she was screaming. "Is he the one?"

Fourth's reflexes were better than Gemini's; he was alert right away and jumped in front of the woman, his hands raised between them, ready to stop her if needed. "Calm down," he said in an almost whisper, but still managed to sound harsh. "Calm the fuck down. Right now."

Gemini stood immobile in his spot, a few steps away from them. He wasn't sure what to do, he felt numb all over.

When the woman couldn't get an answer from Fourth, she turned her attention to Gemini, a finger pointing right at him. "Are you the one who's trying to steal him away from me?! Tell me!"

Steal him? Was she talking about Fourth?

"He is mine! Do you understand me? You can't take him away from me!" she kept yelling. "He is mine! Mine!"

The woman grew even more agitated as she shouted and tried to get closer to Gemini. He instinctively wanted to step back, but Fourth was already in front of her, holding her back.

"I said, calm down!" Fourth warned her once more, his voice also getting a little louder.

She ignored him and kept chanting the same thing over and over. "He's mine! You can't take him!" She was now struggling to get out of Fourth's arms in an attempt to jump on Gemini. "I won't let anyone take him away from me!"

Fourth looked over his shoulder. He couldn't face Gemini from the position he was in, but it was obvious he was addressing Gemini when he called out, "Leave. Now."

Gemini knew it was for him, but he couldn't find it in himself to move. He was completely frozen in his spot. He didn't want to go.

"Gemini," Fourth called once more, voice ice cold and authoritative, almost like he was someone Gemini had never met before. "Leave. Go home."

He could be as strange as he wanted, but Gemini didn't want to leave him with a lunatic woman in a situation like this. What if she hurt him? What if she attacked him instead?

"Are you sure?" Gemini asked, timid.

"Leave," Fourth repeated right away.

And it seemed like the last thing he wanted to communicate, because without any other word, he started walking toward his bike, dragging the woman along with him.

Gemini contemplated his options as he watched Fourth struggle with the screaming mess in his arms. He didn't move. He wanted to help Fourth, but he didn't want to upset him either. He stayed where he was and watched until Fourth managed to get the woman on his bike and drove away without a second glance in Gemini's direction.

It felt just like that day when he had seen him with her. The same attitude, the same coldness, the same Fourth.

When they were gone, Gemini was left behind with the people watching them from the side of the road. Then, he finally moved and went back to his dorm with his head low.

—

But Fourth's disappearance didn't take days this time.

Gemini couldn't sleep, which made him feel restless, so he tried to text Fourth before leaving for school, just to ask if he was safe, but he was ignored, just as he'd expected. He went to his class, came back, and tried to reach Fourth twice more after that, with no better luck.

Then, after dinner, he decided to open the game to occupy his mind with something else.

When his character appeared on the screen, he guided him out of the house and toward the farm. He first collected the eggs and feathers around the hen, then went to gather the crops. While he was busy picking the ripe fruits by hand, one by one, -because he still didn't have the collecting heads for his sprinklers- someone else crossed into the borders of his land.

And this person had a little pink dress on.

A second later, a message popped up in the text box. *"Hi."*

Gemini stared at it for a moment. He wasn't sure if this was really Fourth or an NPC looking just like his character, considering Fourth still hadn't answered Gemini's Line texts. But his character was on Gemini's farm, greeting him as if nothing had happened.

Another message followed. *"You there?"*

"Where were you?" Gemini typed, not beating around the bush.

"I'm sorry, I saw your texts but couldn't answer."

"Why?"

"My phone is broken."

Gemini's fingers itched to ask *why* again, but he fisted his hands over the keyboard. He knew it was probably related to that woman, but he wasn't sure if it was his place to know.

"I thought of e-mailing you, but then I knew you'd be here," Fourth added while Gemini was still battling with his urge to ask questions. *"Come to think of it, I don't have your e-mail address anyway."*

"Fourth," Gemini finally wrote.

"Yes?"

"Who was that woman?"

There was no movement on the other side for a few seconds, and Gemini felt his heartbeat getting faster and faster, even though he tried hard not to feel nervous.

"You don't have to worry about her," was the only thing Fourth replied with.

Gemini swallowed around his dry throat and flexed his fingers. He didn't know what he'd been expecting. *"She said I was trying to steal you from her."*

"She was just confused. She didn't know what she was saying." Another message followed. *"You shouldn't pay her any mind."*

Gemini knew the conversation was about to end there, and that this was the limit of the information he was going to get. The way Fourth was so eager to skip over the whole thing felt like he was drawing a fine line between him and Gemini, and showing him the shadow of the wall Mint had mentioned yesterday. Maybe that wall was still there, no matter how much Fourth had changed on the outside. It was there, just hidden from plain sight, still protecting him from everything he feared.

"Okay," Gemini responded after a while, not wanting to push him any further. *"At least tell me if you're okay."*

"I'm okay," Fourth answered. *"I'm sorry for scaring you this morning."*

"I wasn't scared for myself. I was scared for you," Gemini said truthfully.

Fourth's character walked closer to Gemini, as if he could reach out to the real Gemini through their 2D avatars. *"Don't be. Nothing can hurt me."*

Gemini didn't know what to say to that. Even he could see how insincere Fourth's confidence was, there was no way Fourth wasn't aware of how he sounded.

"Come on, follow me. I want to show you a place too," Fourth said, changing the topic altogether. *"We almost have enough points for a proposal. Our last dates should be special."*

Gemini decided not to insist anymore, he'd already tried his luck enough with this issue and was afraid things would get awkward between them again. So he just agreed and followed Fourth to wherever he wanted to take them.

They got on their horses and rode to the far east of the map. They crossed the damaged bridge and reached the old lighthouse. When he saw Fourth getting off his horse, he realized this was the spot Fourth had wanted to show him.

A new message from Fourth appeared on the screen. *"Look! Isn't it so pretty here?"*

And, at that moment, Gemini's chest swelled with a foreign feeling. Something warm, soft, but ticklish had come to sit right on his heart. For some reason, all the images from the day piled up on top of one another in front of his eyes. Fourth's little blanket on the bus, his offer to drop Gemini off at his dorm, the way he'd held that woman back this morning, the way he reached out to Gemini through the game because he had no other way, and now, at the end of the day, showing him this place…

Fourth was really nice, against all the odds. Against everything he kept hidden about himself. Against all the other sides of him he refused to show.

But what was the reason? Why was he so nice?

Maybe if he weren't, it would be easier to feel hurt when meeting his high walls. If he weren't, Gemini would know how to react properly when he was left in the dark, even after being accused of stealing someone. If he weren't, Gemini wouldn't feel that strange little pride when Fourth reached out to him, whether through an email or a message in the game, even though Gemini had been the one trying to initiate contact.

But he was nice, and that was messing with Gemini's logical side so much.

"Do you like it?" Fourth asked when Gemini still didn't respond.

Gemini knew this spot. Of course he did. He'd been to every single place in this game, visited every inch of it, knew every road, every tree, every little animation by heart. And he knew this one especially, it was on the main map, just right next to the city center.

But just knowing that Fourth had come into a game he didn't even enjoy in his free time, searched for a place for a 'special date,' finally found this spot, and thought of showing it to him… made Gemini feel like he was going to cry.

Especially after his cold words this morning, his disappearance all day, and getting a taste of all his secrets, this sweet side of him was so hard for Gemini's heart to handle.

He wasn't a crybaby! He was a full-grown man! Of course, he wasn't going to cry.

He wasn't. But still, he felt his eyes burn.

"I love it," he answered. *"This is the best spot I've ever seen."*

Chapter End Notes

Don't mind the chapter number, I'm not sure how far this is going to go.

Chapter 8: He Is Busy

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Just a few days later -Gemini wasn't sure how many because he wasn't counting (nine)-, he was at the council, busy working hard on the website. He'd been coming here often since they'd returned from the trip. Not because this was the only place he could catch a glimpse of Fourth, not at all, but because he wanted to finish this website before the semester was over. He was a man of his word, no other reason.

However, it was still nice that he got to hear news about Fourth here and there when the council members mentioned him, just as they were doing at that moment. Great coincidence.

"TikTok is so dull when P'Fourth doesn't cause any scandals," one of the juniors complained loudly enough for the whole faculty to hear. "Did he already run out of people to sleep with? Why is he so inactive these days?"

Ping perked up at that. "Even if that's the case, he can always start from the top again. I'm sure plenty of them would be willing for a round two."

Okay, maybe it wasn't that nice to hear these things at all. Gemini didn't like this topic. He grimaced as he tried to bring his focus back to the screen. It wasn't proper to eavesdrop anyway.

"He doesn't sleep with the same person twice, though," Ping added, his crisp and clear voice making its way into Gemini's ears way too easily. "It's against his 'no strings attached' personality."

"He thinks he is the male lead of a movie, I swear. What kind of made-up personality trait is that?" Winny grumbled from the back of the room, probably from his desk.

Gemini agreed, silently. It didn't make any sense. Some people were nice to be attached to. Some people were worth giving another try.

Then, he frowned to himself. Was this why Fourth wasn't showing his face around Gemini anymore? Ever since the parking lot incident, Gemini had only seen him once while he was leaving the faculty, and Gemini was heading to the council room. Fourth hadn't even seen him because he had been in a rush. Even though they'd had two more dates in the game in between and chatted through the message box, that had been the limit of their communication.

Was he ignoring Gemini now? After everything? After that weekend? Because they… touched each other's… parts once?

"I'm sure he's not like that to everyone," Est's voice cut through Gemini's thoughts. He was talking in a way as if he were addressing the students at a morning assembly. "He must have

his reasons. Once he finds the right person, I'm sure he'll open his heart and treat them differently."

"Nah, he is way too big of a player for that," Ping dismissed Est's sermon with one sentence.

Nobody said anything for a second, and Gemini felt like the absence of the key sounds was too apparent. He got too conscious of his own stillness and quickly started typing random things to look like he was actually busy and not actively listening to their conversation.

"He will, just trust me," Est finally responded. "And he's not playing around anymore because he's busy. He took another temporary part-time job to buy himself a new phone."

Huh?

Wait a minute. Gemini had no idea about this either. How could Fourth manage to fit in another job between his already packed schedule? Even without it that guy had been living twenty-five hours a day.

"Oh yeah, I saw his phone. How did he manage to shatter it so badly?" It was Winny again. "It was a sad look."

"He dropped it, apparently," Est answered.

Winny laughed a little. "He must've dropped it in front of running traffic. Like the screen was in pieces, and the phone was bent backward. There was no way it could get fixed."

"Oh," was all Est said.

"Damn," was all Gemini could think. No wonder Fourth hadn't replied to his texts that day.

"But two jobs are too much," Winny spoke again. "I know his family is not doing well financially, but he's going to fumble the midterms if he doesn't quit soon."

Ping chimed in. "I offered him my old phone, but he says he wants a new one. It's a shame he can't even order food like this."

"You know he has a problem with receiving help from others," Est pointed out.

"He has a problem with everything," Winny snorted.

There was another moment of silence again, and that was when Gemini realized he'd been writing nonsense in the editor for far too long. He quickly started deleting the whole paragraph of random sentences about Fourth's part-time job, filled with numbers and symbols in between words.

But the peace didn't last long. "You think he'll start partying again when he gets a new phone, then, phi?" the junior asked cheerfully, bringing back the certain topic for some reason.

It made Gemini want to push the keyboard away and stomp his feet on the floor. For no reason whatsoever.

Why was this kid so obsessed with Fourth's fun anyway?!

Gemini didn't care. He just didn't want to know about parties, TikTok, or who wanted whom for a round two. He didn't want to hear about people's private lives, that was all. Why were they so interested in who Fourth was bedding? He could bed whoever he wanted! Or, not bed anyone if he wanted as well…

"Absolutely," Ping answered the junior's question.

"I don't think so," Est answered at the same time.

"Whatever," Gemini answered in his mind.

He bent down to reach into his bag and found his earphones. He put them on hastily, filling his ears -and brain- with music instead of these people's nonsense chat.

To his surprise, the group also stopped speaking a little while later after Gemini disconnected from their voices. With that peace of mind, Gemini was able to get some work done.

After spending a few fruitful hours in the room and shaping the website into something that didn't offend the eye, he found himself spending the rest of the day thinking about the things that had been discussed in there.

Not the partying part, but the phone part.

The thing was, Gemini had an old phone too. It wasn't *old* old, it was just last year's model, but because his father was obsessed with technology, he kept renewing their phones every year, and now Gemini was using a newer one. He'd had no idea Fourth was struggling to get a phone, he would offer it if he'd known. But now, after hearing everything, he wasn't sure how Fourth would react to it. The guy wasn't necessarily an open book for Gemini to take a quick guess.

When the tenth day of Fourth's absence rolled in, Gemini was still debating on a way to approach this situation. He wanted Fourth to take his time to save up, take it easy with work, and focus on his studies instead. He also wanted Fourth not to be off the grid anymore, because waiting for him to come to the game like a wife waiting for her soldier husband to come back from the war, and that was kind of getting to his mind. He felt like his playtime had increased three times ever since Fourth became unreachable, while doing nothing but checking the screen if he was online or not. He felt like it would take forever to save for a phone!

The same evening, after having his dinner and just before starting to prepare to write his report for tomorrow's class, Gemini took a quick look at his already running game. The first thing he saw was the golden level truffle his pig dropped, and the second thing was the green sign next to Fourth's name.

He let out a yelp and quickly threw his books on the desk before sitting down in his chair and causing it to roll back with the force.

Right then, before he could reach his keyboard, a message dropped in the box. “Hey boyfie! Did you realize the ‘propose’ option is now available?”

Gemini felt a sudden giggle rise in his chest, he didn’t know why. He held the sides of the desk and pulled himself closer to the computer. *“Yeah, I was waiting for you.”*

“Aww, you wanted me to be a part of this special moment?”

“... We can’t get engaged if you are not here to accept the proposal.”

“Aww, you do want me to be a part of this special moment.”

Gemini let the giggle slip past his lips and pushed his glasses back on his nose. His grin was causing them to slide down. *“The important question is, do you want to be a part of this special moment?”*

“I DO!”

“Hey, we’re not even engaged yet.”

“Whatever, I accept everything.”

Gemini laughed at that. *“Then I’d be honored if you decided to be a part of our engagement, yes.”*

Three dots appeared on the screen, indicating that Fourth was typing. Then they disappeared. They appeared and disappeared again, two more times after that.

As Gemini was starting to worry, the message finally appeared on his screen.

“I miss you.”

Gemini’s smile slowly dropped from his face. That wasn’t something he’d been expecting to see. Not Fourth saying it, and certainly not Fourth feeling something like it.

He hadn’t expected them, but those words were like a direct shot to his heart anyway.

Gemini put a hand on his chest and typed with one hand. *“Do you want to come over?”*

Fourth took a while to answer, just like he had. *“I can’t. I have to wake up early for school tomorrow.”*

Gemini put his other hand on top of the one resting on his chest. His heart was beating too fast for a simple exchange of words on a screen. It was okay. He wasn’t being rejected. Fourth was just busy.

Then Fourth added, *"Why did you have to ask me that? Now I won't be able to sleep tonight."*

Gemini stared at the words, blinking, and typed, *"You said you missed me… and I offered a solution to that."*

"Are you pouting right now?" Fourth asked, very randomly.

Gemini raised a hand to touch his lips for a second. *"I think so."*

"While I can't see you? God, killing me would hurt less."

Gemini couldn't help the corners of his lips from twitching again. *"Same solution goes for that too."*

"Don't play with my sanity," Fourth warned.

Gemini took a deep breath and typed away what his fingers were itching to convey since that first message. *"I miss you too."*

Yes, he did that. He actually said that. He was getting too bold for his own good, and he wasn't sure if that was a good thing.

Then he wanted to get up and run away from the building altogether, but he opted to patiently watch the three dots in the chat box blink. He wasn't going to join the witness protection program because of a simple confession of his current feelings. It wasn't that big of a deal. Right?

RIGHT?

Yet right then, another message from Fourth popped up on the screen. *"I'll be downstairs in twenty."*

—

Twenty minutes was enough to freak out, tidy the room, do the dishes, and make the bed.

What twenty minutes wasn't enough to do was be ready to see Fourth again. Not after telling him those four words. Not after ten days of waiting. And especially not after what had happened the last time they'd seen each other. Or maybe, Gemini was never going to be ready to see Fourth, ever. He was just too much of an expectation for Gemini's heart. He was too much to handle spontaneously on an occasional day. He was just too much all over.

When Gemini was satisfied with the way his room looked, he quickly put on a pair of sweatpants and headed downstairs.

His timing was perfect, because as soon as he was in the lobby, he could see Fourth turning the corner. He quickly made his way outside and started waiting in front of the glass doors,

still trying his best to keep his glasses in place.

Fourth was clad in black from head to toe, mid-thigh shorts and his usual loose, sleeveless t-shirt. A laptop bag hung off one shoulder, and his buzz cut was hidden under a dark gray cap.

A handsome smile spread across his face as he walked closer. “Hello there,” he greeted, giving Gemini a small wave.

Gemini waved back awkwardly. He was so nervous that he felt a slight tremor in his hand as he did.

He breathed out a quiet, “Hi,” then gestured toward the doors. “Let’s go in.”

Fourth nodded.

When they were in the elevator, Gemini tried to come up with a topic to ease the tension, the one he himself had created and he himself was suffering from. “Umm.. how was the ride?”

Fourth took a glance at Gemini’s face and started chuckling. “It was good. Your dorm is not too far from mine, actually.”

“Good, good,” Gemini muttered.

Fourth kept staring at him with raised brows. “Are you okay?”

Gemini nodded furiously. “Yes. I’m fine. Great. Perfect. Why?”

“You look nervous. Wait, are you shaking?” Fourth took a step closer.

That was precisely when the elevator made a ding sound, and the doors opened.

Gemini ignored Fourth’s words and threw himself out of the cab. “Here, this is my floor!”

After making sure Fourth was following him, Gemini started making his way to his door, his feet threatening to tangle with every step as he tried his hardest to keep them straight. When they finally reached his room, he put in the password and pushed the door open, inviting Fourth to enter first.

Fourth didn’t say anything, even though he kept watching Gemini closely. He carefully took his shoes off, put his bag on the floor against the wall, and walked inside, looking around.

It wasn’t a huge room, but it was big enough for two people to be in. It had a double bed on the left with a wardrobe next to it. An L-shaped desk divided the room into two, and on the other half, there was a small kitchen counter with a mini fridge underneath and a microwave on top. Finally, the bathroom door was on the left side of the small corridor in front of the entrance. That was it. That was all.

“This room is big!” Fourth said as he turned in a full circle, sliding his cap off his head in awe. “You use it all by yourself?”

Gemini stepped out of his shoes and walked close to him. “My dad didn’t want me to have a roommate so I wouldn’t be disturbed when I study,” he explained in a small voice.

Fourth faced him, surprise written all over his expression. “I share a room with three people, and it’s smaller than this.”

“You can come here whenever you want to study. My desk is big,” Gemini tried to offer casually.

Gemini couldn’t even hear his own words, because as soon as they were out of his mouth, Fourth grabbed him on the waist, picked him up, turned him around, and sat him on the desk he’d been mentioning just now. Fourth’s cap and one of Gemini’s slippers flew off in the process.

“Wha-” Gemini tried to react.

But Fourth pressed their bodies together, hugged him tight, and pushed his face into the crook of Gemini’s neck, making him forget whatever he’d been about to say. He practically wrapped Gemini around himself.

“Why are you being nervous around me?” he spoke against Gemini’s skin, his breath ticklish. “I thought you were comfortable with me being close.”

Gemini gulped loudly. “Uh- I am comfortable. I’m just…”

Fourth pressed his nose right under Gemini’s jaw and took a deep breath. “God, you smell amazing. When I’m away from you, I remember your scent being heavenly, but then I get to see you again, and you smell even better.”

Gemini raised his hands and held onto Fourth’s shirt on his back. “You like my smell?”

Fourth nodded, before closing in and putting a small kiss on the same spot.

“I like your smell too,” Gemini said in a whisper, as vocally as he could muster up.

“Sometimes your scent lingers on my clothes, and nothing drives me crazier than walking around smelling like you,” Fourth added, then put another kiss, a little wetter this time. “No, it’s worse when I can’t get to smell like you, I guess.”

Gemini felt goosebumps rise along the skin where Fourth’s mouth was working, and he found himself fisting the fabric in his hands for something to hold onto. “Fourth,” he breathed, half a plea and half an attempt to get his attention. He was already starting to feel unbearably hot.

That made Fourth pull back until they were face to face.

Gemini felt the strength drain from his legs under the sheer intensity of the boy’s gaze. “Are you talking like this because you missed me?”

“I’m being honest,” Fourth said in a rush. “And I did miss you. I kept thinking about you, even though I was busy to death.”

Gemini held his gaze as he dipped his toes into dangerous waters. “I heard you were saving up for a new phone.”

Fourth nodded. “There’s a phi I know who runs a small event organization company. I told him I could work as a waiter if he ever needed one for his events.”

“And he needs one often?”

“Yes, but it’s okay. I can save the money I need quickly this way.”

Gemini bit his bottom lip and looked away. He thought about it for a few seconds before speaking again. “Fourth, I want to tell you something, but promise me you won’t get angry.”

Fourth removed his hands from Gemini’s waist and put them on his cheeks, gently lifting his head until their eyes met again. “How could I ever get angry at you?”

“Okay…” Gemini muttered as he stared into Fourth’s eyes, not wanting to miss even the slightest change in his expression. “I have another phone.”

He watched Fourth’s face go slack before he said, “Gemini.”

Gemini quickly put his hands on Fourth’s cheeks, mirroring him exactly. “No, you promised you wouldn’t get angry.”

Fourth sighed silently, but didn’t move away. “I’m not angry. I just can’t accept-”

“Listen to me first,” Gemini pleaded as he scooted closer to him on the desk. “Please.”

Fourth studied him for a few seconds before nodding, giving silent permission to continue.

Gemini felt his heartbeat climb up his throat as he started talking as fast as he could. “It’s just last year’s model, and it’s in great condition. I’d be really happy if you took it.”

Fourth pressed his lips together, clearly unhappy.

“I’m not saying I’ll give it to you forever,” Gemini quickly added. “Just borrow it until you save up enough for a new phone, but without a second job and without tiring yourself out this much.”

“I can manage it,” Fourth answered, his tone not arguing but not convinced either.

Gemini started rubbing his thumbs over Fourth’s cheekbones. “You’re only human, Fourth. You can only do so much. If you mess up your midterms, you’ll have to retake the classes next year. You’re already busy as an architecture student, with a part-time job on top of that. You have enough on your plate. You don’t need more.”

Fourth didn’t respond, except for the small crease appearing between his eyebrows.

Gemini pressed on. “Just accept the help. It won’t cost you anything, I promise. And it won’t cost the person who wants to help you anything either.”

“I…” Fourth trailed off.

So, Gemini decided to bring out the big guns. “And this way, maybe you can spend more time with that person, too. I heard they were pretty frustrated for not being able to reach you for the past ten days.”

“Were they?” Fourth asked, sounding rather hopeful considering his guarded look.

“They were,” Gemini confirmed with a curt nod. “And I heard you missed them, too. See, win-win.”

And that made Fourth crack out a small smile. He leaned over to put a short but mellow smooch on Gemini’s lips. “Where did you learn to convince me so easily like this?”

Gemini shrugged, feeling shy.

“Okay, I’ll borrow your phone until I have enough money to buy a new one,” Fourth said, but only after landing himself a second kiss. “On one condition, though. No, make it two.”

“What is it?” Gemini asked calmly, even though he was screaming victory cries on the inside, *“Yes, yes, yes! He accepted my help!”*

Fourth raised his index finger between them. “One, you won’t be nervous around me anymore.”

Gemini’s inner voice immediately shut up. It wasn’t like Gemini was being nervous on purpose! He just couldn’t control his nerves when he was near Fourth!

“I’ll try my best,” he promised anyway.

Fourth raised his second finger. “And two, you’ll let me taste it again.”

Now, that made Gemini frown. “Taste what?”

—

Without any further word, Fourth leaned in and started kissing Gemini’s neck once more. He went up to the spot right under Gemini’s ear in three short pecks and sucked on it for a quick second.

“This is going to leave a mark,” he whispered right above the tingling skin. He then put his lips back and sucked it once more.

Gemini felt his vision going dark, so he closed his eyes and let his head fall back, his hands now holding onto Fourth’s shoulders to keep him grounded.

He didn't care about a mark. He could lie to everyone and their mothers and say he hit it somewhere. Hell, he can even tell them he burned himself with a hair curler or something. Nobody would believe he'd gotten laid even if he told the truth anyway. He just wanted Fourth to be in this much proximity, and if it cost him a few lovemarks, he'd be happy to receive them.

Fourth kept putting open-mouthed kisses all over his neck, and then up on his jaw. His hands were on the sides of Gemini's thighs, fingers roaming up and down.

Gemini's lips parted with a deep inhale. His toes curled, and heat pooled low in his stomach. He knew he was being too affected, but when his evil twin had the reins, he had no choice but to lose his senses and turn into mush in Fourth's hands.

"Are we going to do it this time?" he asked, sounding a lot like he was hoping for a 'yes'.

"Do what?" Fourth took his earlobe between his teeth and bit on it.

Gemini pressed his teeth together. "Do… the deed."

That made Fourth lean back a little to chuckle. "Do you want to do *the deed*?"

Gemini nodded. Whatever, he was way past shame.

Fourth leaned his forehead against Gemini's, his hands sliding higher on the fabric. "Do you want to be the one to do it? Or should I take the lead?"

A shudder passed through Gemini's body. He wasn't aware they had to have these talks beforehand. "I don't know," he mumbled. "I don't have the experience to choose. What do you want to do?"

Fourth hummed under his breath. "I want to do everything with you."

"What do you mean?"

"I want to have you, obviously."

Gemini dug his fingers into Fourth's shoulders. "Then have me."

"But not this time," Fourth said, his fingers now on Gemini's hipbones. "This is your first time with a man, I don't want you to hurt."

"But I don't want you to hurt either."

"It's okay, I know you'll do a good job."

Gemini frowned. "Are you saying you can't do a good job?"

Fourth gave him a mischievous smile. "I can make you see the gods up close."

Hearing that, Gemini lost the ability to breathe, yet again.

“But today, I want you to do me. Would you want that?” Fourth whispered against his lips.

Gemini made an awful noise that sounded like, “Yes.” Then, he closed his eyes and tried again. “Yes. Just tell me what to do.”

Fourth didn’t respond further. He just sealed his lips over Gemini’s waiting ones. He kissed him wet and slow, immediately deep and intimate. One of his hands moved between them and cupped Gemini over his sweatpants. He started caressing him.

Gemini let out a muffled moan, getting hard in the speed of light.

From his professional work on Gemini’s crotch, Gemini would think Fourth had handled nothing but men's parts until now. He knew where to hold and where to press. The speed, the pressure, everything was perfectly balanced, giving Gemini everything he could possibly need. But come to think of it, Gemini would probably lose himself just as much even if Fourth just rubbed him with the back of his hand.

God, Gemini was a literal simp, wasn’t he?

They kissed more, getting sloppier by the second, fogging Gemini’s glasses all over. Fourth’s hand kept stroking him through the endless layers of fabric between them. At one point, Gemini caught the hem of Fourth’s t-shirt with a frustrated whine and started pulling it up, wanting it gone so he could touch Fourth’s body freely.

Understanding what Gemini wanted, Fourth let him go and let Gemini take the fabric off. But as soon as he was free again, he caught the band of his sweatpants and slipped a hand inside.

Gemini had no time to react. One moment, he was putting the discharged t-shirt on the desk next to himself; the next moment, there was a hand closing onto his bare skin. He quickly put his palms on the desk for support, and cried out another moan.

Fourth started fisting him up and down, the commotion half out there, half under the pants. He started peppering kisses all over Gemini’s face at the same time. “I love that you are so expressive,” he said between kisses. “Let me hear you more.”

“Fourth,” Gemini pleaded. “Please. I don’t want to finish like this.”

Fourth smiled against his cheek. “Do you think I’ll let you finish this early?”

Gemini was completely erect under Fourth’s touch now, and even though he knew he wouldn’t let it go this easily, it felt so good that he wasn’t sure he could keep himself in check like last time. Especially when his anticipation and pent-up yearning were so high.

Fourth caught Gemini’s lips again, but this time, he let his erection go and pulled him onto his feet by the hips. They didn’t break the kiss as they walked around the desk, and lost Gemini’s glasses, t-shirt, and sweatpants on the floor in the process. When they reached the feet of the bed, Fourth pushed his shorts down as well, so they were both only in boxer briefs as they met on the mattress again.

Fourth lay down on his back, like a full free buffet only for Gemini's eyes, and Gemini could swear he almost reached orgasm right then and there.

This man was the most gorgeous thing he'd ever seen. Not only that, but he was in Gemini's bed, on Gemini's pillows, watching him with hungry eyes and expecting him to come closer.

Was this how paradise felt like? Was this the end of the world?

Gemini put his mouth on Fourth's chest without wasting any more time, and started kissing him everywhere. Licking the lines between his abs, grabbing his skin, taking bites here and there. He played with Fourth's nipples, as much as he could remember from what Fourth had done to him previously, sucked them, and went down to suck on many more places.

Fourth was silent except for a few grunts, but his hands stayed in Gemini's hair, wordlessly urging him to do whatever he wanted. His body language was so loud that Gemini never felt the absence of words. One look in his eyes, one twist of his fingers, one roll of his hips was enough to move Gemini exactly where he needed him.

When Gemini's hands reached the happy trail leading up to Fourth's black briefs, he hesitated for a second.

Yet Fourth caught his reservation right away. "Take it off," he urged.

Gemini could only rush to comply. He quickly hooked his fingers on the band and slid the fabric off Fourth's legs.

This was his first time seeing Fourth completely naked, and he would be lying if he said he wasn't a little shy to look at him directly. He was hard, red, and asking for attention, and Gemini wanted to give it to him, but he wasn't sure if he was skilled enough to do that.

He hesitantly took it in his palm and started pumping it in a very slow motion, which made Fourth's face turn into a similar shade of red, and his chest rise with a long inhale.

"Gem, I brought lube and condoms with me," he breathed out, sounding so much like he was in pain. "They're in my bag."

Gemini gave the bag a quick glance. It was too far away, he didn't want to leave. "Do we need them?"

"Yes," Fourth grunted. "And we need them quick."

Gemini looked back at him and sighed before letting him go. He padded over to the bag and rummaged inside until he found the small bottle and a carton box, then rushed back to the bed.

"These?"

Fourth nodded, eyes half open. "Put some of that gel on your hand."

The rest was quite nerve-wracking, especially because Gemini didn't want to cause Fourth any pain, but he did the best he could with Fourth's guide. He sat between Fourth's opened legs and worked on his entrance as Fourth instructed him to do, while rubbing him everywhere he could reach. He started with one finger, then added more as it got easier to move inside. It was nothing as Gemini had ever experienced before, and Fourth didn't seem like he was enjoying it too much at first, but as he relaxed more, Gemini also started feeling like he understood what he was supposed to do.

He added more lube and started moving in and out in a way that made Fourth bite his bottom lip. He then started opening his fingers as he pulled them back out, a little liberty he took by running his logic. He took his time, and it was a show watching Fourth's expression turn from discomfort to slowly building up pleasure.

Fourth pulled Gemini over himself, and found his mouth for a kiss, his hands holding onto Gemini's neck tightly. It took a long while, none of them seemed to want to rush it, but they eventually reached a point where Fourth was completely out of words and was squirming a little under Gemini's touch.

Gemini continued moving his fingers in and out as he thrust his tongue inside at the same rhythm. Fourth became softer and slippier against his fingertips with each stroke. Melted every time Gemini found that magical spot.

"Should I add one more?" Gemini asked, separating their lips for a moment.

"No," Fourth shook his head. "I want you inside already."

Gemini searched for any sign of uneasiness in his eyes. "Are you sure?"

"I'm ready," Fourth confirmed.

With this answer, Gemini pushed himself up and removed his fingers, causing Fourth to hiss. He was able to open the condom box, but he couldn't rip the plastic open no matter how. His hands were shaking too much, and they being slick with lube wasn't helping his case. In the end, Fourth sat up and took the package from him, opening it in one go. He waited for Gemini to lower his underwear and rolled it on Gemini himself.

When they were done, he rose on his knees and turned around, holding onto the headboard.

Okay, Gemini was absolutely going to die.

He closed the small gap between them and held Fourth on the hip with one hand, guiding himself with the other.

"Are you okay?" he asked, feeling nervous and delirious at the same time.

"I'm more than okay," Fourth said with an entertained smile in his voice. "Come on, don't be scared."

Gemini took a deep breath and pushed over the ring, barely managing to put the head inside. It was incredibly tight and cramped in there.

“Fourth,” he gritted out. “Tell me if it hurts, okay?”

Fourth leaned his forehead on the wall, his knuckles white on the headboard. “I’m good. Keep moving.”

Gemini muttered an “Okay,” and pushed himself a little further, before pulling back and pushing a little bit more. He thrust in small motions over and over until he was completely seated inside, and his forehead was clad in sweat.

Fourth breathed deeply, and Gemini followed suit. He waited for Fourth to get used to him, but also for himself to calm down a little; he was starting to feel way too crazy. It was too tight and too warm inside, it was so good that he was afraid he could never experience anything better than this for the rest of his life.

“Move, baby,” Fourth put a hand over Gemini’s on his hip. “Make us both feel good.”

Gemini put his lips on Fourth’s shoulder and started putting kisses on his skin as he began to carefully roll his hips. He moved his mouth up to Fourth’s nape, purposely leaving a wet trail behind, while he moved in and out, almost all the way.

Fourth interlocked his fingers with Gemini’s and held on tightly, his hips also moving back to meet Gemini in the middle. As Gemini’s kisses reached his cheek, he turned his head to the side, calling him over for a kiss.

Their mouths met once again, their hips finally working together in an indulgent rhythm, their breaths harsh and their wicked scent mixing in the air.

“So good. You are doing so well, Gem,” Fourth whispered against his lips. “Don’t stop.”

Gemini saw stars exploding in front of his eyes. He wasn’t going to stop. If Fourth wanted him to, he would try his damn best to go on forever and a day like this. He reached over with his free hand and found Fourth’s erection, his fingers getting wet from its leaking right away. He started stroking it, and watched Fourth’s head drop back onto his shoulder, mouth open.

Seeing this reaction, Gemini couldn’t help himself, he had to pick up the pace. Breathy sounds built up in his throat as he moved on both sides. He realized he loved touching Fourth so much, especially when he could see, with his own eyes, what it did to Fourth. It gave him a different type of kick, he felt like he was on top of the world.

Their skin started clashing into each other, and the world felt like it had turned upside down. Gemini felt his blood boiling with want; he wanted more, so much more.

At first, he started giving more strength to his thrusts, then, as Fourth’s eyelids dropped shut with clear pleasure, he started doing it faster. He reached the deepest point he could go, pulling all the way back and rocking forward to the same spot. Over and over. Again and again. It was so slick, so hot, and so inviting inside, Gemini’s control started slipping away from his hands with every stroke.

He shivered, he burned, he was alive. He breathed Fourth in, tasted his skin, became one with his existence. He wasn't sure who he was, where he started, and where Fourth ended, but he knew this was where he was always supposed to be. Since always. Until whenever it could go.

"Fourth," he moaned out loud. "Fourth, Fourth, Fourth."

Fourth grabbed his hand even tighter. "Faster," he requested. "Gemini, fuck me faster."

Gemini's heart started thumping even harder in his chest somehow, as he moved back and pulled Fourth back with himself on the bed. He didn't let their hips separate for a second and made Fourth bend over with his forearms on the mattress, then quickened his thrusts before they could even find a proper balance in their new position. He was that desperate.

He kept stroking Fourth in the front and pushed harder and harder into him. His movements became erratic, hips rocking out of his control, going on and on and on.

The sound of their meetings became wetter and louder, bed croaking under their force, endless groans on their lips. Temperature rose around them, their skin dripping sweat, almost unbearable, but it couldn't be any better than this.

"Gemini," Fourth called out in agony, removing Gemini's hand from his erection and dropping his head onto the pillows. "I'm there. So close."

Hearing this, Gemini held Fourth's hips with both his hands and pulled him hard to meet his hips mid-thrust. He repeated this over and over, until he started seeing colors dancing around the edges of his vision.

Fourth cried out his name one last time, and that was enough for Gemini to start filling the latex between them. They came at the same time, reaching the highest of the highs, and falling from there together.

Then they fell side to side, absolutely spent.

—

When they were able to move again, they got up and turned on their computers. They quickly got on their horses and rode to the lighthouse.

The proposal cutscene only took ten seconds.

Their way back to bed was another ten seconds.

But their second round of sex to celebrate their in-game engagement took way longer, of course.

Chapter End Notes

I hope you liked the new movie in Gemini's very secret personal cinema.

Chapter 9: He Is Acting Weird

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

When Gemini entered the council room and saw Fourth alone in there, he didn't know he was in trouble. He thought this would be another day of working on the website, while the high sexual tension slowly clogged the veins around his heart and brain. Fourth would make it even worse by touching him here and there, saying things that would cause Gemini to sit on the edge of the chair, and not stop until the other members come back from their classes. The website would be almost untouched, and Gemini would be a crimson mess.

Yes, the website ended up being untouched, and Gemini was indeed blushing from head to toe.

Yet, it wasn't because of the tension. It was because as soon as Gemini closed the door and their eyes met, Fourth stood up, walked up to him, got him out of the way, and locked the door. Then, he immediately pushed Gemini onto a chair and kneeled between his legs, fingers already busy unzipping Gemini's uniform pants.

"What are you doing?" Gemini put his hands on Fourth's shoulders in panic. "We're in school!"

Fourth stopped and gave Gemini a confused look, as if Gemini was the one doing the atrocious thing between the two of them.

"We are in school," Gemini repeated, slowly.

"I know," Fourth answered, eyebrows still high on his forehead. "So what?"

Gemini pushed him slightly, just to give him a sign to stop attacking his crotch, not to get him off literally. (Who would want Fourth to get off them for real? Please.)

"We can't do it here."

"Yes, we can."

"No."

"Why not?"

Gemini tilted his head to the side. "Fourth, we are in school. Your student council room. What if someone comes in?"

Fourth sighed dramatically and returned to his work on the zipper. "Nobody is going to come in. They are all in class right now."

"But-"

“And even if they do, the door is locked.” He gave Gemini an innocent smile. “And I’ll finish you off and open the door before they could suspect anything, I promise.”

Gemini felt the two sides of the waist of his pants being pushed open, and fingers catching his briefs by the band. He had already known that his brain and his penis had two absolutely different thought processes, but he had to confirm the fact at that moment, because he was getting hard by nothing but the sound of fabric and Fourth’s dangerous words.

Ever since they’d had sex for the first time last week and Fourth quit his second part-time job, they’d been doing things like this more often than not. They were on top of each other almost every other day. Even though they’d only gone all the way a couple more times, Fourth had visited Gemini’s dorm room a lot, and needless to say, Gemini hadn’t had this many orgasms in such a short amount of time in his life before. A little over a week in, and he felt satisfied for life.

Or maybe not, because it did look like he *sprang* out of his underwear.

Oh, damn it.

“No backing out. You already promised I could taste it again,” Fourth said with a lick on his bottom lip.

Now, why did he have to do that? He knew Gemini was a loser for that wet bottom lip trick.

“You’ve tasted it so many times since then,” Gemini breathed out. “Do you have to taste it here, too? Now?”

Not only had Fourth tasted it, but Gemini had also tasted Fourth so many times as well. He almost learned how to do it properly at that point. He agreed it was fun and sexy. But those times had always been in the peace of his room! Not in a public place that was full of students!

Fourth looked at his half-erect penis for a few seconds with longing before turning up to Gemini’s eyes. “You always look delicious. Not my fault.”

He spoke like that, not knowing what he himself looked like.

He was a cut from the most premium wagyu, even on his worst day.

Gemini glided one of his hands up to Fourth’s neck. “If we do this, you need to be quick, okay?” he said. “I don’t want to get caught. I don’t want anyone to hear.”

Fourth’s face suddenly brightened with a happy smile. “Don’t worry, baby, I won’t let anyone else, but me, hear your moans.”

Baby?

A sudden rush of blood tickled Gemini’s cheeks. He adjusted his glasses and cleared his throat. He wasn’t used to that word making an appearance like this when they were not actively in the middle of sex. It felt… domestic. And intimate. And familiar.

It made Gemini's insides flip and twirl.

"Give me a go already," Fourth whined, shaking Gemini by the thighs. "Your cock is waiting for me. Look, it's getting sad." He looked down. "Are you sad? You are, right? He's being cruel to both of us."

Gemini was only half back in the moment, so he just frowned. "Are you… talking to my penis?"

Fourth nodded right away. "I like pretty things. I like talking to them, too."

Gemini leaned his head back on the chair. "Oh my god," he whispered.

"Can I do it?"

"Ugh."

"I think it's crying. I might cry too."

Gemini chukled. "That makes no sense."

"Can I do it?"

"Yes."

Gemini uttered the word, and a second later, he was completely surrounded by a warm mouth, and the remaining half of his consciousness flew away as if it never existed.

He pressed his lips together to hold back his groan. He hardened rapidly as Fourth's tongue lapped at him. He moved his hand from Fourth's strained neck up to the back of his head, where the hair was now longer than it had ever grown before, only one-third blond, looking almost brown, although it was still quite short. He loved rubbing his palm on the stubby hair, it felt like a massage on his skin. It also had a weird effect on Fourth, as he made a throaty noise whenever Gemini did that. Just like now.

Fourth took a tight hold of Gemini's pants and started going up and down, his cheeks sucked in. There was a wet, subtle sound after each of his pulls, and a painful intake of breath from Gemini after each of her pushes.

Fourth picked up the pace, Gemini closed a hand over his own mouth.

Fourth swirled his tongue around the head, Gemini blindly searched around until he found Fourth's hand and pulled it over to cover his own mouth with it instead.

Fourth started taking it all the way up until the tip touched his throat, Gemini nearly lost all his composure and let out a scream. He didn't, even though he almost died in order to stay silent.

The bobbing of Fourth's head kept its pace, with Gemini's hand still on the back of it. He went on and on, sliding on the length, over and over, without mercy. His lips were red from

the friction. And wet. Very, very wet.

His free hand reached over and held Gemini by the back of his hip over the fabric, just on the upper part of his ass cheek, for support, and maybe for other purposes. His eyes were locked on Gemini's half-hooded ones, which fluttered open and shut but stubbornly tried to hold his gaze, because honestly, Fourth had never looked hotter than when he acted like he was hunting something in the wild. So determined, so vicious, and so hungry.

Gemini gulped hard, and his fingers around Fourth's hand tightened over his lips. The boiling feeling low in his stomach got bigger and bigger until he couldn't stand it anymore. All of his senses dulled, his skin came alive with zaps of electricity, and his toes curled in his shoes. He pushed his head up and felt his back arching as his whole body went rigid.

His whole world turned upside down.

Then, he let it go.

He convulsed, while Fourth kept milking his pulses until there wasn't anything left. Until Gemini was overstimulated and whiny, pushing him away with weak hands.

When Fourth finally put him back in his pants and zipped him up, Gemini was almost in a coma, looking and feeling like a melted ice cream over the chair, all limbs hanging from the sides and mouth open.

"Was it good, handsome?" Fourth wiped his mouth with the heel of his palm and leaned over to give Gemini a loud peck on the cheek.

Gemini grumbled something unintelligible.

Fourth gave him an amused look and put another kiss on the same spot. "I wanted to finger you too, but the position didn't allow me."

Gemini tried to swat him away, but he had no energy to raise his arms. "Stop saying these things out loud."

Yes, he had put his fingers inside Gemini a few times by now, and even though it was a weird sensation, there was this spot that caused Gemini to behave like some type of animal. So if the previous act they had committed was not appropriate to be done in school, the act Fourth had mentioned would be the last thing Gemini would ever do between these walls before he quit everything and moved to Mars.

Fourth chuckled as he stood up. "Why?"

"It's embarrassing," Gemini said, looking up at him.

"You weren't embarrassed when I did it, though. You seemed to be enjoying yourself."

"You're so shameless."

Fourth laughed even more and leaned over to hold Gemini by the armpits. “Come on, get up. We have work to do.”

So, in the end, the work turned out to be making Fourth’s house model. But it was fine for Gemini, because that was how they were found when other members returned to the room five minutes later. Gemini gave Fourth a dirty look, silently accusing him of almost getting them caught, but Fourth just bit his bottom lip and smiled just to himself, all devilish and happy.

—

Midterms were closer than ever, and Gemini was a little worried. He had been studying whenever he could find the chance, but he also had been writing his reports in the morning, ten minutes before his classes, so he certainly wasn’t at the top of his game. He felt like he would still ace the exams if he could spend the remaining time buried in his books and survive on Indomie ramen and mixed coffee, but here he was, waiting in front of his school for Fourth because the blondie wanted to have dinner with him.

He sat on a bench on the side of the road and started rummaging through the book he was holding, trying to see if there was any topic he didn’t feel confident about. Or any topic he actually felt confident about.

Oh, he was screwed, wasn’t he?

“P’Gemini, hello!”

Gemini got startled at the sudden sound, but he acted like he hadn’t just jumped on his seat, and crossed his legs as if he was just changing his sitting position. Then he looked up and realized Mint was standing in front of him.

He smiled and returned her wai. “Oh, hey! What are you doing here?”

Mint’s smile softened. “I was going home. What are you doing? Are you studying?”

“No. I was checking how far behind I am for the midterms,” Gemini answered with a huff. He closed the book and put it on his lap. “It seems like I’ll have to stay up for a few nights to close the gap or my mom’s going to kill me.”

Mint casually sat next to him on the bench, without any invitation needed. “I’m sure you’ll be fine. Your grades are always so high, phi.”

Gemini nodded his head in a heavy motion. “We’ll see, I guess.” Then he gestured to her. “How are your studies going? Are you ready?”

Mint looked at him for a second, then started laughing. “My mom’s going to kill me too, but probably twice or three times.”

With that, Gemini joined her laughter. “That bad?”

“I don’t even know what I’m supposed to study, honestly.”

“The school won’t have any students left after the midterms, huh?”

As their laughter died down, Gemini turned to his other side to put his book back in his bag.

It was right then that Mint decided to say something. “Phi, if you don’t have any plans after the exams, do you want to watch a movie together?”

Gemini was surprised, so he looked back with his whole body still facing the other side, but his head turned to her like an owl. “Movie?” he echoed.

Mint’s cheeks popped out with a shy smile. “There is this new movie about a woman who dies and meets her two late husbands after death. It looks so fun. I thought… you might like it.”

Gemini straightened up and turned his gaze forward, blinking as he stared at the road. “I mean, it does sound fun.”

Mint’s posture visibly perked up. “Right? Then-”

“What’s going on here?”

Oh, Gemini knew that voice. He knew it very well.

It was Fourth.

Gemini’s heart missed a painfully delighted beat as he looked up and found Fourth walking up to them.

He looked incredible, as always, his uniform still perfectly in line even after a long day of classes, a pair of sunglasses sitting prettily on his perfect nose, his long legs carrying his big strides. His sleeves were rolled up, and he was carrying his bag with one hand while the other was resting in his pocket. His perfume filled the air as he reached up to them and stood right next to Gemini, and the familiarity of his scent left Gemini feeling so calm and so sated, it was a little scary.

“Fourth,” Mint greeted him, nice and friendly.

“What was so funny?” Fourth asked as a response.

Gemini frowned. *Huh?*

Fourth was looking -more like glaring- at them back and forth. “You were laughing just now. What was funny?”

Right then, Ping caught up to Fourth with running steps. He was out of breath. “What the hell, man?” He coughed out. “Why did you take off so fast? I thought something bad happened.”

Gemini was still confused, so he couldn't think of greeting Ping. He kept his eyes on Fourth's angry face.

Mint, however, was pretty clearheaded. "We were joking around," he answered Fourth as a matter of fact. "Why are you asking?"

Fourth ignored Ping and focused on Ming with a serious face. "Joking around?"

Mint shrugged. "Yeah, P'Gemini is really funny."

Fourth didn't like hearing that. He narrowed his eyes as he took a step closer to the bench. "Do you think you know him? Did you know that I'm carrying his child?"

What?

All three of them froze for a moment. A silent wind passed through the space between them. A flock of birds suddenly flew away, as if running from the chaos.

"Huh?" Ping exclaimed behind him.

"Fourth," Gemini muttered.

Fourth gave her a smirk. He was satisfied with himself and with the impact he'd caused.

Mint crossed her arms on her chest and leaned back on the bench. "Yeah, I know. In Star Village, right? Everybody knows about it in our club."

Fourth's smile fell.

Ping went, "Ah, right."

"You weren't even going to know about it if P'Gemini didn't chase you down, and now you're trying to flaunt it," Mint added with confidence. "Right, phi?"

That was for Gemini, but he was too overwhelmed to respond. What was the meaning of this talk? Why was Fourth acting like this out of nowhere?

"It doesn't matter who chased whom down. We are engaged at the end of the day. We're going to get married in a few weeks," Fourth argued, quite loudly.

Mint shook her head. "Whatever, it's just a game anyway. Why are you mentioning it?"

"It's not just a game."

"It is. Just let me finish my talk with phi."

"Hell no," Fourth said before Mint could even say the last words. He leaned over and took hold of one of Gemini's arms. "Phi is coming with me."

"Phi?" Gemini asked, shocked.

“Shut up,” Fourth whispered as he pulled Gemini up to his feet.

Mint stood up following him. “Why are you acting like this? Let me talk to him for a second! I won’t bite him.”

“I wouldn’t let you bite him anyway!” Fourth tried to pull Gemini behind him. “I saw you talking to him at the resort, too. Why do you have so many things to talk about?”

Mint’s eyes went wide. “Are you following me? Who I talk to is none of your business!”

“This is so much fun,” Ping spoke all to himself.

“And Gemini is none of your business!” Fourth spat.

Mint looked at Gemini and then back at Fourth. “You guys are not even dating. Hell, you don’t even have feelings for him. Why are you so possessive?”

Fourth started saying something, but he fell silent. His mouth opened and closed while he stared at Mint. His hand was still holding Gemini’s wrist.

“You’re so immature,” Mint said when she couldn’t get an answer.

“He’s heard worse things,” Ping added from the back.

Mint sighed loudly and put her bag over her shoulder. “I’ll text you later, phi. Fourth is being too unreasonable to deal with today.” She then waved at Gemini and turned around to leave, completely ignoring the other two.

Gemini watched as she walked away, then turned to Fourth. “What was that?” He felt like he had watched an absolutely ridiculous movie and now wasn’t sure what the plot was about.

“Don’t answer her texts,” Fourth’s grip tightened for just a second. It was an order, but it sounded more like a plea, with a question mark at the end and a cherry on top.

“Why?”

“Because she’s interested in you.”

Gemini glanced back at her for a second, baffled. “How do you know that?”

Fourth let go of Gemini’s wrist and put his hand on the small of Gemini’s back instead. “Don’t think about it. Or her. Let’s go find some food.”

—

The next day, after his classes were over, Gemini went to the student council room, as usual. But this time, when he arrived, everyone was there, and Ping was busy telling about the episode from yesterday.

Fourth was in his usual spot by the table, working his house model, and looked somewhat disturbed, while everybody in the room was laughing and asking Ping questions, as if the people involved in it weren't in the room with them.

"And he even told him not to answer her texts after the poor girl left," Ping said with a head shake. "If anyone saw them, they'd think he's in love with P'Gemini, I swear. He was that intense. He was about to get into a cat fight with her."

"Boy, he is not your fiancé for real. Calm down," Winny called to Fourth from his desk, where he was munching on a sandwich. "Let him have a real romance outside. You can't stop him just because he knocked you up in a game."

Fourth scoffed and leaned even lower over his model, focusing on whatever he was gluing at that moment. The line between his eyebrows looked serious to Gemini's eyes, considering the supposed light-hearted banter going on in the room.

One of the first-years looked at Gemini and then at Fourth with a frown. "Phi, maybe you do like P'Gemini," he threw it out there without warning or a caution sign. "Why don't you try dating?"

"He doesn't have the ability to love," Ping answered instead. "He even hates the idea of it."

At that, Est, who had been the only one silent during the whole talk and watched everyone intently without a comment, opened his mouth for the first time. "Maybe he changed his mind."

That made Fourth raise his head, only a little, to glance at Est. His expression didn't give anything away, and the look was only a second long before he turned back to his work. Yet, Gemini could swear he saw Fourth's expression get even darker.

"He changed so much, phi," the newbie agreed with Est. "He even grew his hair. I've never seen his hair longer than a skinhead buzz cut in his old pictures."

"He has a point," Winny joined, pointing at the newbie with his sandwich first, then changing direction to Fourth. "You don't act like your old self anymore. You guys are always together. Eating together, sitting together, doing homework together. You buy Gemini coffee, Gemini massages your shoulders… Hell, you even cuddled on the bus ride. Just go on a date and see if it works."

Gemini started worrying the strap of his bag in his hands with his thumb, too afraid to glance at Fourth's face anymore, for some reason. He opted to look at Est instead, because Est was looking at him with eyes full of concern.

"Think about it," Winny continued. "You've only accepted his help since forever, and you're using his phone. Even this is so big for you."

"Nah, just let him answer that girl's message and let them see that movie," Ping said with a dismissive hand wave. "Phi deserves more than being a TikTok video, and this brat can only offer him a walk of shame."

Ping was joking. Of course, he was joking. His tone was light, his body language was relaxed, and their daily bickerings always consisted of similar words to each other. But hearing it, Gemini felt a slash of burn in the middle of his chest. He tried his hardest to ignore it. He tried to pull the corners of his lips to offer a smile, so he could show himself, and everyone, that he wasn't affected, but he couldn't do anything but stand there like a statue.

He didn't mind what Ping had said. He didn't want to be more than what he currently was to Fourth. He wasn't in love, Fourth wasn't in love, and there was no need to talk about nonexistent things. Why would they need to prod and poke their feelings when everything was fine the way they were?

Or he thought this was his position. However, the throbbing in his chest didn't exactly agree with him.

Est kept watching Gemini closely for a few more seconds. Then, he spoke out once more. "Okay, enough with this topic. I need you guys to gather around me. We have to discuss something about the budget."

The newbies groaned hearing the word 'budget', but still stood up from their chairs to go to Est's desk. Winny took another bite from his sandwich before walking up them, and Ping rolled his chair closer instead of walking.

Gemini kept his head low as he looked around. Without saying a word, he took advantage of the sudden loss of interest in him, quickly opened the door, and slipped out of the room.

He made it only a couple of steps when the door opened and closed behind him once more, and Fourth instantly caught up to him.

"I'll give you a ride home," Fourth offered casually, almost as if they weren't coming out of the most awkward talk of their lives.

Gemini didn't say anything and started quietly walking next to him.

They took the stairs and headed for the door. The silence between them was not weird, but it wasn't comfortable either. Gemini had a lot on his mind, even though he couldn't pinpoint any of those thoughts and give them a name. Was he angry? Was he embarrassed? Was he worried? He didn't know. He felt like he had this very small problem. He wasn't sure what, but he knew he had to solve it somehow.

Fourth, on the other hand, still had the same heavy expression on his face. His lips were downturned, the lines under his eyes and next to his mouth deep. Gemini wished he could read his mind and learn where he was at. He wanted to know what Fourth was so disturbed about.

"Fourth," he finally spoke, and cut the stillness in the air in half. "Are you free tonight?"

Fourth looked at him, surprised. "Hm? Why?"

Gemini tried to muster up a smile. "Do you want to stay over tonight? In my room?"

Fourth hadn't slept with Gemini before. As in, sleeping in the same bed, together. Not even once. Not even after they'd had sex. Including their first night at the resort. He would usually leave during the night after whatever they had been busy with was over, but sometimes Gemini would fall asleep in Fourth's arms, and when he woke up, he would be alone in the bed.

He had always thought Fourth must have had a reason not to stay the night, and didn't think it was that important. They weren't anything to each other to adjust their schedule to sleep in the same bed, and Fourth had always been busy the next day. It was normal.

But now, for some reason, Gemini wanted to hear Fourth's answer.

He wanted him to say yes, because then it wouldn't be a big deal. It wouldn't be something Fourth had been avoiding intentionally. It would be a coincidence, it would only be a recurrence. And it wouldn't be him not wanting to sleep next to him. Knowingly. Wantingly.

Because if so, it would be serious. It would mean something else.

He had to say yes.

Fourth stopped walking, and that caused Gemini to stop as well and turn to face him.

"I can't," Fourth said, his voice very low.

"We can study for the midterms," Gemini spoke over him, trying to sound cheerful. "You know I'm worried about the exams. We can help each other and order food, too."

"I can't," Fourth repeated. "I can't spend the night with you."

Gemini's expression fell, even though he did his best to keep it as it was. "Why not?" he asked, not sure if he wanted to know the truth or not.

Fourth released a deep breath and looked down at the ground. He didn't respond for a while, and seemed to be thinking of the right words, until he opened his mouth again. "They were right," he said. "I don't act like myself. I'm acting weird."

Gemini held composure, but his heart started beating so hard that he could feel it in his throat. "What do you mean?"

Fourth raised a hand and put it on top of his head, rubbing big circles, still looking down. "This is not me. I- I can't do this."

Gemini felt his fingers trembling. "Do… what?"

"I can't spend the night with anyone. I can't be jealous. I can't accept help from anyone. I can't be weak," Fourth sputtered the words, but his voice was almost inaudible. "I can't get used to you."

Gemini looked around in hopes of getting his head clear.

What was Fourth saying?

Why did this sound like a breakup talk when they weren't even dating? Why did he feel like he was going to get his heart broken when he didn't even have any expectations about Fourth, or about what they had? How could he get his feelings hurt when he didn't have any?

"You are making me nervous," he muttered.

Fourth's eyes raised and caught Gemini's in panic. "I'm sorry," he started. "I don't want to hurt you. I know I'm going to hurt you one day if this goes on like this. I know… and I don't want you to hate me."

"Fourth-"

"Gemini, I can't get attached to you. I feel like I'm doing exactly what I'm not supposed to be doing, and I wasn't even aware of it until now."

Gemini watched Fourth crumble in front of his eyes. His back was bent, his shoulders low, one hand on his head, his expression all over the place. His eyes looked as if they were broken into pieces, his orbs dark and lost. He was confused. He was… scared?

Gemini couldn't help himself. He reached over and caught Fourth's hand, taking it off his head and holding it between his fingers. "It's okay," he whispered. "It's okay, Fourth. You are here. You are safe. Nobody hurts anyone."

Fourth looked like he wanted to take his hand back, but he left it there. His expression softened a little, but this time, his eyes went glossy. "I can't spend the night," he whispered back. "I can't spend any more time with you."

"It's okay."

"You are taking me places I don't want to go."

"Okay, I won't do that anymore."

Fourth turned his hand and held Gemini's hand himself. "Gemini. You don't understand."

Gemini held his eyes steady, even though he himself was barely holding on. He didn't know what to do, what to think, how to react. He didn't understand anything, but still wanted to be the strong one between them. At least for Fourth's sake.

"I understand. My existence is overwhelming for you right now," he said slowly. "And I understand that you don't want to be next to me anymore."

Fourth tightened his hold. "No… That's not…" But he didn't finish his words.

Gemini nodded. "I'll give us space, okay?"

"I'm sorry, I'm so sorry," Fourth repeated. "I didn't want it to be like this."

They stood like that for a while, facing each other, Fourth fighting off tears, and Gemini feeling lightheaded. Fourth kept holding Gemini's hand with the same intensity, but no other word was exchanged.

"Let's stay away from each other and think about everything," Gemini said.

Fourth tried again. "I… Gemini…" Then, he fell silent again.

Gemini gently removed his hand from Fourth's hold. "It's okay. Everything is going to be okay."

Then he turned around and walked away.

He didn't hear anything from Fourth.

Chapter End Notes

I'm so sorry for the delay, guys. I've been busy with packing and moving to a new place, and now starting a new job, visa stuff and all. Everything is really hectic.

Oh, by the way, we are getting really close to the final.👀

Chapter 10: He Is Not Doing Well

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Gemini had never experienced heartache before. He was surprised to feel real, physical pain in the area where his heart was, and it was weird to him because he'd always thought it was supposed to be all about emotions. Whenever his thoughts wandered away and landed on something about Fourth -his face, his hands, his habits, the things he liked, the things he hated, the things he forgot at Gemini's dorm room, or even the little coffee-man sticker he'd put on the back of Gemini's laptop- there was this pressure in the middle of his chest. As if he was getting kicked there, or the Flaming Sword from Star Village was slashing him in half. It was worse than a stomachache, somehow.

That day, when he and Fourth had had that talk, and Gemini'd walked away from him, he'd immediately realized this was too much pain for him. He'd never felt that bad in his life. He'd been devastated. He'd been ruined. He hadn't wanted to go anywhere, he'd just wanted to curl up on the pavement and cry very loudly until Fourth came and picked him up. He hadn't wanted to leave Fourth behind.

But he had done it anyway. He'd walked all the way back to his dorm and got caught in the storm halfway there, in the most dramatic way possible. When he'd arrived in his room, he'd taken a shower, put on his pajamas, and buried himself in his studies. He'd thought this was how he was going to get out of this situation unharmed.

It wasn't easy. Of course, it wasn't. The plan had worked for a period of time, he would forget about everything and happily spend hours and hours with his textbooks, but then, a random thought would lead to another, and he'd find himself thinking about Fourth yet again. The initial feeling would be butterflies, because he enjoyed everything about Fourth so much, even when he wasn't around, but only came around to appear in Gemini's daydreams. But then, Gemini would remember their last talk, and his heartache would come back. When he would finally reach a point where he couldn't handle it anymore, he'd shake his head and go back to reading more.

It was a cycle.

He knew what he had wasn't normal feelings someone had for a friend. Or for a fling. Or for whatever he used to think Fourth was for him. He knew this was deeper and bigger than that, because nothing could explain the anguish he was in right now, just remembering the situation he'd left Fourth in. Just knowing damn well that Fourth was hurting. Just not being able to reach out to him, even though it was almost 2026 and everyone was only three taps on a smart screen away.

He knew that much, but what he didn't know was the extent of his feelings. He didn't know their color, where they were leading, or how far they reached. He wasn't sure how he was supposed to handle them, he wasn't sure what to do with them altogether. He felt like he'd have a better game plan if he could just read himself like a code pad and know where the

defect was and why he was glitching this badly. Maybe he really did understand machines better than his own human body. Maybe that was why he'd been such a noob when it came to feelings until now.

All that aside, there was one thing he was pretty much aware of: the medicine for his current pain was Fourth, and he desperately wanted to find a way to talk to him before it was too late. He was scared, yes. He was scared of Fourth. He was scared of possibly meeting a side of him he'd never seen before, and also scared of losing the side of Fourth he knew and adored. Or maybe he was just scared of losing him completely.

But if they talked about everything, even if just for a few minutes, perhaps they could solve their problem. Perhaps they could help each other understand the situation and get out of it somehow. Gemini just knew that if he let things fizzle out like this, he was going to regret it for a long time, and possibly lose something that could be great. Something that could be amazing.

But he was afraid. He was so, so afraid.

For now, he was going to study. He was going to give Fourth space to think, to calm down, and maybe even to focus on his own exams in the meantime. He didn't want to pester or overwhelm Fourth any further, especially when he was clearly not comfortable with Gemini being around. He didn't want to make things worse, and if waiting a few more days could help ease the tension that had built up between them, he would do so for as long as necessary.

He just needed time, and he knew Fourth needed it too.

Just like that, the week ended, the weekend passed, and the days followed each other in the same routine and with the same heaviness on Gemini's heart. He went to school, ate, drank coffee, and studied more. His sleeps were disturbed and short. His routine was all over the place. His thoughts were a mess.

It was a cloudy Thursday, only four days away from the midterms, when he was yawning big as he was walking out of the faculty, when William suddenly let out an excited scream and almost had him have a heart attack.

"Gemini!" William shouted from literally one step away from his ear, jumping up and down, not even a little embarrassed by his big adult body. "What do I do?! What should I do?!"

Gemini was startled by the sudden sound, so he immediately thought something bad had happened to him. "Why? What happened?" he asked while he tried to see if his friend was in pain or something.

William ignored his worry and started spinning around in skipping steps. "Est wants to have dinner with me," he sang aloud. "He wants to meet me today."

Gemini reached out and hit the back of William's head with the book he was holding. Not too hard, but with the amount of force he deserved (it made a satisfying sound). "What is wrong with you? You scared me!"

William kept jumping around, unfazed. “I won’t let your depressed ass stop me from being happy.”

“Huh? I’m not depressed,” Gemini argued. “Why are you attacking me for no reason now?”

“Yes, you are,” William said as he started bouncing away from him. “You’ve been pouting and sighing for days now. But today is my happiest day, and I won’t let you ruin my mood. Bye!”

Gemini watched him get further and further away. “Where are you even going?”

William stopped in his tracks and gave him a deadpan, disappointed look. “Do you even listen to me when I speak? I’m meeting the love of my life in fifteen minutes! I don’t have time to deal with you right now!”

“Oh, get lost,” Gemini dismissed him with the back of his hand. “Go be happy with your love and leave your friend alone.”

“I’m still not letting your depressed ass stop me from being happy,” William kept singing as he turned away and started skipping again. He was still singing even after he turned the corner.

Gemini gave William’s back a stink eye until he disappeared from sight. Then he checked the time on his phone and turned around to go on his way. He still had a lot to study and a lot to brood about.

It was right then when Est appeared in the place William had been occupying a few seconds ago, like the genie from the lamp.

“Gemini, hello.”

Gemini got startled for the second time in the span of half a minute. He looked at Est with his eyes wide open, a hand on his chest. “Oh, my god. Where did you come from?”

Est chuckled a little. “I was hiding while waiting for William to leave you alone.”

Gemini frowned and glanced toward the way William had just disappeared. “Are you saying you tricked him into leaving me alone?”

“Yeah,” Est confirmed with no remorse and pointed to his right. “Do you want to grab a cup of coffee with me?”

“But… What about William?” Gemini tried to ask, but Est was already walking.

“I’ll meet him in a few minutes, don’t worry,” Est threw over his shoulder. “He’ll wait.”

They walked into the cafeteria and found an empty table. The air conditioner was nice after the unbearable humidity outside. Gemini took a seat and waited until Est came back with two cups of iced lattes in his hands and joined him.

Est put one of the cups in front of Gemini before settling in his own chair. “I’m sure Fourth would’ve wanted to do this right now, so I’m honoring his wishes.”

Gemini took the cup, but the sudden mention of Fourth’s name was a little too harsh on his heart. He kept his eyes on the sleeve as he muttered, “You’re speaking like he’s dead or something.”

“I mean, his body is around, so he’s alive,” Est said, taking a sip of his coffee. “But I’m not sure he’s mentally with us anymore.”

“What do you mean?” Gemini asked, his eyes cautiously finding Est’s. He wasn’t sure if he wanted to dip his toes in those waters. “Is he not feeling well?”

Est gave him a very small but deliberate grin, almost as if he finally caught him on the hook. “He’s not *doing* well,” he said. “He is… struggling a lot.”

Gemini wanted to ask more, of course, but he didn’t want to give anything away to Est. He didn’t know how much Est knew about what had happened between him and Fourth. So he only said, “I see.”

Est took another sip. “He doesn’t talk to anyone. He doesn’t come to the council room. I’m not even sure I’ve seen him at the faculty.”

Gemini nodded silently.

Est put his forearms on the edge of the table and leaned over. He seemed serious now. “I know the council members were a bunch of asses to you and Fourth last week. I apologize on their behalf. They don’t know what’s going on, and they’re too stupid to catch nuance. They just accept everything as Fourth tells them, and in their eyes, he’s a loveless, heartless campus playboy and nothing else. They don’t know what you are to him, that’s why they were so harsh.”

Now, that made Gemini lean back on the chair by reflex. “Me to him?”

“I really thought you’d be the one to open him up, you know?” Est said, as if he hadn’t heard Gemini. “And I still think that. He is a closed box with a lock on it, but from the moment you entered the picture, I knew you’d open him up. I knew you’d bring his real self out.”

In a moment of frenzy, Gemini reached out and took his coffee from the table. He hastily found the straw with his lips and took big gulps from it.

The way Est didn’t react to his antics, some would think he was used to people like him. “I’ve never seen his eyes soften like that when he talked about someone. Never seen him so fond of anything, let alone a person,” he continued. “He didn’t let anyone talk about you, good or bad. He was extremely secretive. And when I finally met you, and saw the way he followed you everywhere, with his eyes, even if he couldn’t do it physically, I knew you were different. I knew you were the one for him.”

“So…” Gemini said, dropping the plastic from his lips. “You knew all along?”

Est smiled again. “Yeah, of course. How do you think you had P’Winny’s condo to yourself? Or the room at the resort? Or the council room? I mean, how could all those alone times be a coincidence?” He shrugged. “William is really easy to get out of your way, but the others are a pain in the ass. They always want to be around Fourth. Nobody knows how much I struggle every time.”

Gemini watched him for a moment, his jaw almost on the floor. “You hid it from us all this time, so why are you confessing right now?”

“I just… I guess I wanted to ask you not to give up on Fourth yet,” Est answered truthfully, his back suddenly straight, his brows drawing together. “Look, he’s not a bad person. He’s really nice, he has a big heart, and he’s very emotional. I don’t exactly know what went on between you two last week, but he’s completely broken right now. He has his own problems,I know that. He’s struggling a lot. But I promise he’s trying his hardest to get out of that darkness. Please give him some time. Give him some grace.”

Gemini bit his bottom lip as he listened. He glanced around for a moment, gathering his thoughts, finding his voice again.

“I won’t,” he finally said. “I won’t give up on him.”

“That’s so good to hear,” Est let out a relieved sigh. “God, I was so afraid you’d say you were done.”

“I never planned to give up on him,” Gemini added, voice still shaky.

Est’s mouth opened for a surprised, “Oh.”

“I’m not the best at reading people, but I don’t think he wants to end things for real. At least not yet.” Gemini sounded absolutely unsure of what he was saying, but he said it with his whole heart. He believed his own words.

Fourth had been so open with his motives and feelings since the day they’d met, and had always urged Gemini to communicate with him, no matter how small the concern might be. Gemini felt like he would get the message loud and clear if Fourth truly didn’t want to see him anymore. He hadn’t received any message other than the fact that Fourth was deeply confused right now, so he wasn’t going to hold his words over his head, especially when they had clearly been spoken in a moment of emotional outburst.

“He doesn’t want to end things,” Est said with a curt head shake. “Trust me, he doesn’t. He likes you too much to do something so stupid like that.”

Gemini’s breath got stuck in his throat, so he started coughing. He wasn’t ready to hear that.

“Anyway, I need to go before William starts crying in the middle of the street. I let him wait too long,” Est said as he abruptly stood up and collected his bag. “Just give Fourth a chance to fix things, that’s all I wanted to ask from you.”

Gemini kept coughing, but he waved a hand at Est to go on and not mind him.

“Oh, and one more thing,” Est called back from where he stood two steps away. “Gemini, you’re only twenty-one. You’re too young to determine what you like and what you can or can’t do. Let yourself live and enjoy things, I’m sure you’ll find out more joys than what you know.”

Then, he was gone.

And Gemini was left behind, out of breath, and very confused about who that eighty-year-old guy who’d possessed Est was.

—

The next evening, Gemini rolled in his bed and stared at the ceiling blankly. He kept going back to his talk with Est, and the more he thought about it, the worse he felt. He imagined Fourth miserable, not eating, not sleeping, with big bags under his eyes, maybe even crying, and started to feel guilty for not reaching out to him sooner. He thought he was doing them both good by giving it time, but was he actually making things worse?

He wasn’t usually a person to overthink and dwell on things for hours like this, but something about this non-breakup breakup was messing with his original settings and making him feel stuck. He couldn’t go back, he couldn’t go forward, he was just standing in the middle of the traffic, and no green light was in sight.

He huffed and kicked his feet on the mattress out of frustration until he was out of energy. Then he started searching for his phone under the pillows. He wanted to doom scroll on one of the social media apps, or he was going to lose the remaining working parts of his mind.

When he finally found his phone, he turned over onto his stomach and propped his chin on the mattress, facing the screen. At first, he opened Instagram. It was full of silly animal videos, AI ice fruit–cutting clips, and unread messages from his relatives asking astonishingly invasive questions about the stories he’d posted in the past. He exited the app almost immediately and clicked on TikTok instead.

Now, at first, it was this and that, nothing out of the ordinary, and he was content with the feed.

But then he saw the worst thing he could have ever seen in the history of humans and apps.

He saw Ping’s latest video.

It had been posted three hours ago.

Ping was in a taxi, unable to sit still, visibly excited about going out. His hair was styled, and he was wearing what looked like a red shirt covered in sequins, all glamorous. Then he started talking about how *it was about damn time* and how he’d *finally convinced him to go out after what felt like forever*.

Then he turned the camera to the side.

And it was Fourth next to him.

Fourth didn't seem just as hyped up about going out as Ping, but he was there under the city lights, looking gorgeous, with a half smile on his lips directed at the phone. He was wearing a black shirt with the buttons open all the way down to his stomach, combined with a pair of washed-off black jeans, and a bunch of shiny silver bracelets on both wrists.

Gemini stared at the video blankly for about three loops, and on the fourth, he closed the app. He stuffed the phone back under the pillows, probably somewhere deeper, and got out of bed.

This was what he got for worrying about him. This was what he deserved for wasting so much time thinking about Fourth, when he could have studied more instead. The dear mister was already back in the nightlife, ready to party and live up to his nickname as the campus Casanova.

Gemini put a hand on his chest because the damn pain was back, twice as bad this time, and went to the bathroom to splash some water on his face. It didn't help, because when he was done, he was still not feeling well. His hands were shaking, his vision was wobbly, and the backs of his eyes burned.

He quickly grabbed his wallet and keycard and slipped into his slippers before getting out of the room. Maybe a trip to 7-Eleven would help. He could get some fresh air and buy something cold to drink. Or maybe he could get caught in the pouring rain again and be even more miserable. Or maybe he could get hit by a bike and end up with a broken limb or something, some real pain might help him stop thinking about this fake one.

He took the elevator downstairs, then started walking toward the doors, almost stomping the whole way.

However, just two steps before he reached the glass doors, he froze in his spot.

Was that… Fourth?

Someone with a blond buzz cut, clad in a black shirt and a pair of black jeans, was sitting on the steps just outside Gemini's dormitory building. His build, his wide shoulders, and his posture were extremely familiar. Especially the way he was manspreading, and the way he was leaning his elbows against his legs.

His back was turned to the doors, so he wasn't aware of Gemini's appearance, but his very existence in this place right now was enough to give Gemini a mini heart attack.

Gemini didn't know what he was supposed to do. He wasn't sure if he was ready to face Fourth yet, especially after seeing that video. But at the same time, he missed him like crazy and wanted to see his face right this second if he could help it. Seeing him this close, yet only from behind at this angle, felt like something out of the movie Inception. Was he in a dream?

He took a few deep breaths and walked through the doors. At first, Fourth didn't react to the sound, but when Gemini walked down the steps and entered his line of sight, that was when he looked up, and his eyes went wide.

"Gemini…" he whispered.

Gemini looked at Fourth for a few seconds, inspecting every part of his face and expression, just to be sure he was okay and to appease his own heart that had been yearning. But from outside, he took an opposite attitude and gestured at him with the keycard holder. “Weren’t you supposed to be partying with Ping right now?”

Fourth was already surprised to see Gemini, but the shock on his face deepened at those words. “I didn’t go,” he muttered. “I turned back at the door.”

At those words, Gemini felt a whole mountain immediately lifting off his chest, but he didn’t give anything away. “Why?” he asked, trying to sound nonchalant.

Fourth pushed himself up from the steps and stood in front of him. “I didn’t want to go in. This was the only place I wanted to be.”

Gemini swallowed the dryness in his throat. He lifted his chin in an attempt to look stronger than he actually felt. “You… How long have you been sitting here?”

“A little over two hours,” Fourth answered.

“It’s hot outside. Why didn’t you text me?”

“I didn’t know if you would want to see me anymore.”

Gemini opened his mouth, then closed it again.

So Fourth added, “And it’s been a while since I’ve been here. I got used to it.”

“God,” Gemini breathed out before closing his palms over his face, his whole façade crumbling at his feet. So much for acting indifferent in front of Fourth Nattawat.

“I’m sorry,” Fourth jumped in as soon as he saw Gemini’s reaction. “I didn’t want to bother you. I just couldn’t bear being away anymore. I wasn’t expecting you to come out this late.”

Gemini peeked at him between his fingers. “I don’t sleep before birds start chirping, Fourth.”

Fourth looked away, his jaw working back and forth. “Yeah. Maybe I did have a secret wish for you to come out at one point.”

Gemini was on an emotional rollercoaster today, and he wasn’t sure if he was old enough to get a seat on this particular attraction.

“You should’ve just texted me,” he said as he lowered his hands. “You know I wouldn’t be bothered.”

Fourth dropped his gaze to his hands, where he was fidgeting with his fingers. “I was horrible to you. I said cruel things. I deserve for you to be bothered by me.”

Gemini followed Fourth’s gaze, his eyes settling on those jittery hands as well. “Don’t talk like that. You don’t deserve anything bad.”

“I want to be honest with you, Gem,” Fourth started even before Gemini could finish his words, his voice almost inaudible. “While I’m here, and while you’re out here with me, I want to tell you everything that’s on my mind, but I don’t know how to put it into words.”

Gemini didn’t like seeing Fourth like this. Usually, he was the one who got nervous around Fourth, and he was now realizing how bad it felt to be unable to comfort someone you cared about, especially when the cause of their uneasiness was you.

He quickly lost the war with his inner demons, as always, and reached out to catch both of Fourth’s hands in his own hand. “It’s okay,” he reassured him. “I’ll listen to whatever you have to say.”

At that, Fourth looked up at him. “I’m so scared,” he muttered. “I was scared that day, and I’m still scared today.”

Gemini met his eyes, but opted to stay silent to give him space.

“I’m terrified of letting you close. I’m terrified of opening up to you. That’s why I said all those things and acted like a dick to you that day.” Fourth inhaled deeply. “I freaked out when people slapped me with reality and ended up pushing you away in panic. I know I push you away whenever things get too hard to handle. I’m sorry. It’s just… I don’t know any other way.”

“What are you so scared of?” Gemini asked quietly.

Fourth pressed his lips together. His fingers, trapped in Gemini’s hold, were restless with tension. “I had rules for myself,” he said, almost out of breath. “I never let anyone come close to my heart. Yet you entered my life and reached out and touched it so easily on day one, as if I hadn’t been protecting it for all these years. Gemini… you don’t know how hard it is to watch everything you know crumble in front of your eyes.”

“Fourth,” Gemini whispered.

Fourth closed his eyes and let it out. “I’m scared because it feels like I’m falling for you.”

Gemini’s mouth went slack, and his knees almost gave out. He tightened his hold on Fourth’s fingers for a fraction of support.

Fourth felt it, so he slipped his hands out of Gemini’s grip and wrapped Gemini’s hand in both of his palms instead, almost imitating their position during their last talk. “I’ve never felt like this in my life. You soothe me, you make me so happy, and I spent this last week in so much pain because nothing feels right without you. You came into my life and took a seat in the middle of it, and I can’t seem to enjoy anything anymore unless I share it with you.”

Gemini’s heart was beating too fast in his chest now. He wanted to look away, because Fourth’s gaze was too heavy, but he couldn’t move. He just blinked and blinked, hoping it would make everything, what he was hearing and all the feelings erupting inside of him, make sense.

He wanted to cry and run away, but laugh and sit on the ground at the same time. The rollercoaster was doing crazy things to him.

Fourth, on the other hand, was on a roll. “I don’t know what to do with myself. I don’t know where to go. I don’t know what to offer you, and thinking about what the future might hold frightens me so much. But staying away from you sounds like the worst idea ever, so I just came here to sit on your steps, hoping you’d come out and feel bad for me telepathically.”

Gemini tried to smile, but what came out was a shaky, lopsided one. “I was actually mad at you, because I thought you went out tonight. I saw Ping’s video.”

Fourth’s eyebrows went high as he understood Gemini’s earlier attitude. “Ah.”

“I thought you didn’t care about me,” Gemini confessed. “And it hurt me more than what you said that day.”

“I’m sorry. Ping had been nagging me all day, saying I’d feel better if we went to a bar and drank tonight,” Fourth explained hastily. “And I just realized I wouldn’t feel better no matter where we went, because losing my old self hurt way less than losing you. I didn’t want to take that step.”

Gemini nodded. “You don’t have to explain it. Just seeing you here was enough for me.”

“I do care about you, Gem,” Fourth responded. “Of course I have to explain.”

Gemini nodded once more, his head wobbling a bit too much. “This whole thing is new for me, too, and I’m just as confused about my feelings and what’s going on between us. But if you really care about me, and because I care about you too, maybe we can get something good out of this.”

Fourth pulled Gemini’s hand a little closer to his chest. “I’m willing to try.”

Gemini bit his bottom lip and glanced at the doors behind Fourth. “Do you want to spend the night with me tonight? Just sleep. Nothing else.”

Fourth smiled at him, that familiar, happy, genuine smile adorned his handsome face. “I don’t want anything more than that.”

—

They went upstairs.

Gemini gave Fourth a pair of his pajamas, an unused shower loofah, and a clean towel, then pushed him into the bathroom so he could wash away his preparation for the night, as it still irked Gemini to see him looking so good when it wasn’t meant for his eyes. After Fourth came out of the shower, looking soft and nice, they had cup ramen as a late-night snack and got ready for bed.

They lay side by side without many words exchanged between them, because Gemini wasn’t sure if he was pushing his luck at that point. He didn’t want to make Fourth uncomfortable.

This was the first time he was sleeping with someone, and it was happening because of Gemini's insistence.

However, not long after they had settled under the blanket, Fourth turned to face him and inched closer. Then he wrapped an arm around Gemini's waist and pressed his face into Gemini's neck. Gemini. Gemini responded to his hug by turning toward Fourth and accepting him even deeper into the nook of his body.

There was pure silence between them, only the sound of their breathing and their wildly beating hearts.

A while later, Gemini felt wetness on his neck and a subtle shake in Fourth's shoulders, so he hugged him even tighter, but didn't say another word.

They fell asleep just like that.

And when Gemini woke up, he was greeted by Fourth's peaceful, smushed, soft sleeping face. That was when he realized how much he had actually been expecting to see this scene all this time.

Chapter End Notes

The chapters gave birth yay!

A.K.A. the chapter was going to be too long, so I had to shift the morning talk to the next chapter, and now the finale is still the same distance away.

Also, I really want to thank everyone who commented on the last chapter, because those comments were everything. They gave me life! I love you guys🩷

Chapter 11: He Is Here

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Gemini watched Fourth's sleeping face for a while, longer than he would've normally intended, but he went on with it even after catching himself red-handed. He knew Fourth probably didn't look that cute right then -at least to other people's eyes- with one of his cheeks smushed into the pillow, the other one supporting a deep sheet line, and his mouth a little ajar. But to Gemini, it was the best thing he'd ever seen, hands down. It was so good, so very good, that Gemini wanted to take a picture, print it out, and have it hung in the middle of his room by tomorrow morning.

Or he could convince the real thing to be in his bed every morning for him to see, that would be even better.

Or maybe he was running too fast, considering they spent the night together for the first time ever, and these were things only couples did.

He pressed his lips together to suppress the bubbling giggle in his chest and gathered the blanket under his chin, hugging it tight. He felt giddy. He felt like he wasn't in his bed but on a cloud. His eyes never left Fourth for a second, even though there was literally nothing to miss.

Right then, Fourth frowned and made a little grunting sound as he turned to lie on his back. He was probably disturbed by Gemini pulling at the blanket, fueled by cuteness aggression.

Gemini saw Fourth opening his eyes and, with a decision he made in half a second out of panic, he closed his own and pretended he was still asleep. He didn't want to be caught watching Fourth. That would make him look creepy. And like a lover head over heels. Because he wasn't that. No.

It took a few more seconds for Fourth to move again, as Gemini just waited with his eyes shut, hyperaware of everything going on around him. The movement on the mattress felt like Fourth turned to face him again, and after a while, a whisper of a touch landed on Gemini's cheek. It was the back of Fourth's fingers.

"Cutie," Fourth whispered.

Gemini kept his act intact.

"Oh, he's still asleep, huh?" Fourth kept speaking to himself, still quiet. "He's pretty like this, too, but I wish I could see his eyes right now. I miss them already."

Gemini didn't move a finger.

"Those gorgeous, soft, brown eyes…"

Gemini stopped breathing.

Fourth waited a moment, then made a humming noise. “Such a shame. I wanted a morning kiss, but I can’t kiss him when he’s asleep, right?”

Then, there was another movement. At first, Gemini thought Fourth was going to kiss him for real, hence the speech, and he was absolutely ready for it. But when the sound started getting further away, he realized Fourth was actually about to leave the bed.

He quickly opened his eyes and lunged forward, catching Fourth by the waist and making him fall back onto the pillows.

Fourth didn’t even let out a yelp, he just started laughing. He had already been waiting for this, obviously. “Good morning,” he said as he turned around in Gemini’s arms.

“Don’t go,” Gemini said with a pout when they ended up face to face.

“I was going to use the bathroom.”

“Give me the morning kiss first.”

Fourth chuckled again and raised a hand, combing Gemini’s hair away from his face. “I thought you were sleeping.”

Gemini looked at his mouth. “No, you didn’t.”

Fourth’s pink lips stretched into a pretty smile. “So you weren’t sleeping?”

Gemini tugged on his waist instead of answering.

“Why were you pretending?” Fourth insisted, ignoring Gemini’s silent plea. “Were you shy?”

“Fourth,” Gemini fussed. “Morning kiss?”

Fourth didn’t let it go. “Waking up with me made you shy?”

“Fourth!”

“But it makes me want to make you even more shy now.”

That made Gemini stop in his tracks. His eyes flew back to Fourth’s.

Fourth seemed to sober up at that look. “What?”

Gemini opened and closed his mouth a few times before muttering, “You… you can do that too. If you want, I mean.”

With that, Fourth started laughing yet again. “Oh my God, you’re so horny,” he said as he wrapped his arms around Gemini and hugged him close, his body shaking with laughter. He was almost wheezing. “Who made you so needy like this?”

Once again, did he own a mirror? Did he know how good he looked 24/7? Did he know what he made Gemini think whenever he was around?

When Fourth finally managed to calm down after a long minute of fighting to stay alive, and then taking his time to catch his breath, he pulled away a little and caught Gemini's chin with one hand. Gemini was lying slightly lower on the mattress because of their position, so Fourth tugged his face up until their lips met in the middle.

It was a short kiss, almost a prolonged peck, and even though it was incredibly tender and savory, Gemini wasn't really satisfied. So when Fourth pulled away, he followed him and caught him for another, slightly longer kiss.

After that, they ended up cuddling for a while without exchanging a word.

In the end, Gemini broke the silence. "What was so funny?"

"Nothing," Fourth answered with a sigh. "I'm just happy. You make me happy."

Gemini was half lying on top of Fourth, his face half buried in his neck, so Fourth couldn't see his expression from that position, but he smiled anyway. "You make me happy, too," he said against Fourth's skin.

Fourth paused. "I feel like I'm in a bubble of bliss when I'm with you. Away from life, away from reality. I sometimes think what it would be like if nothing else existed other than you and me."

That made Gemini frown a little. "That… doesn't sound good."

"It is good." Fourth started rubbing Gemini's back. "Wouldn't it be great if we were always in this bubble and didn't have to go anywhere else?"

As the hand on his back moved up and down, trying to bring comfort to both of them in different ways, Gemini stared into space and tried to pinpoint what was bothering him about Fourth's words. What was so bad out there for him? What in his reality was making him so unhappy that he would rather stay inside a bubble?

He raised a hand and placed it on Fourth's chest, which rose and fell in steady rhythm, warm and welcoming. He slid it higher until it rested right over Fourth's heart. "Is someone hurting you?" he finally asked.

At first, Fourth didn't answer, and Gemini thought he never would, judging by how quiet even his breathing had become. His heart almost stopped beating under Gemini's palm, and his body went rigid. His hand on Gemini's back stopped rubbing and instead slid around his waist to hold him closer.

Then he confessed, voice steady, not loud, not quiet, but serious. "I loved someone once."

Gemini felt his hand flex, but didn't dare move it any further. He knew he was about to learn something very important, and he was scared in that incredibly short period of time.

And then Fourth spoke again. “My mom loved him, too. I was five when he left us.”

As soon as Gemini heard this, he tried to pull away to look at Fourth’s face, mostly out of reflex, but Fourth kept him where he was, his arm tightening around Gemini’s waist.

“Fourth,” Gemini whispered in soft protest.

“It’s okay, please let me finish first,” Fourth pleaded, still not letting Gemini move. “I want you to know.”

Gemini thought about it for a moment and reluctantly lay back down.

After that, Fourth began. “I was pretty young when he left, but I still remember him watching cartoons with me and dubbing the characters with silly dialogues. I would die of laughter. He would make me sit on his shoulders when we went somewhere, and I’d feel like I was at the highest point anyone could ever reach. He’d brush my teeth and never forget to give me a white mustache from the foam, making me giggle. He’d make up bedtime stories to tell me before bed every night. He was an amazing father.”

Gemini took hold of the fabric of the pajama top that Fourth was wearing.

Fourth continued. “My parents had to give up on everything when they had me. They were only sixteen and were two headstrong, rebellious teenagers. My mom refused to get rid of the pregnancy, and my father ran from home to be with her. They had to quit school and start working, so they had to act like adults when they were just kids. Way too early to make big decisions like that.”

“Did he… pass away?” Gemini asked, trying to sound as careful as possible.

Fourth let out a bitter chuckle. “No. He ran away.” He fell silent for a second. “Nobody knew where he was for weeks. My mom thought he had died, too. But no. He had a lot of debt, and when he realized he wouldn’t be able to pay it back, he decided to run to China. I guess we’ll never know if he ever meant to take us there with him, because he never came back. Maybe he really died there. Who knows.”

“I’m sorry,” Gemini whispered.

“My parents were never married. They didn’t get married even after they were of legal age, so his debtors didn’t come after us. In the end, my grandparents paid off all his debts, and they blamed us for it, so they cut us off as well. Because we had nowhere else to go, we moved to my maternal grandmother’s house, and I started working a few years later. Somebody had to take care of everyone.”

Fourth leaned down to press a kiss to Gemini’s head. “I’m telling you all this because my mom loved someone, and that love hurt her in a way that will never heal. I loved someone too, and I still have to carry the burden of it. I always thought love was a weakness, a stone tied to your ankle, pulling you back from reaching the surface. I never wanted to feel that kind of pain again, or cause it to someone else. I was never going to put myself in a position that could lead me there. I built myself, my image, my life, brick by brick, so I could save

myself from this misery, from this… poverty. I didn't want anyone to stop me from escaping my situation.

"That's why I just played around. That's why I didn't allow myself to have feelings for anyone. I didn't get attached. I didn't get used to anyone. I didn't let anyone in." He tightened his hold to gesture at Gemini. "But you… You make me happy."

Gemini pushed through Fourth's hold and propped himself up successfully this time.

Fourth's face wasn't in anguish as Gemini had imagined, but his eyes were glossy, with a subtle red hue on his cheeks. As their eyes met, he gave Gemini a sad smile.

"You won't hurt me," Gemini told him. "And I won't hurt you either."

"You don't know that," Fourth responded, trying to sound lighthearted, but clearly failing.

Gemini shook his head. "I know it. I know that much. I also know we're not bad people. We wouldn't hurt each other if we could help it."

Fourth's eyes watered even more as he swallowed. "I already hurt you," he said with a broken voice.

Gemini shook his head harder. "Fourth, you're not your father. You sat in front of my dorm for hours just to apologize. You're trying to make it right. And you know you're not your father because you took care of your mom and grandmother for so many years. You're still working." He then pointed at his own chest. "And I'm not your father either. I can't even throw away my old toy race cars. My mom says she wishes she had named me Loyalty."

Fourth burst out laughing. This time, it was genuine, the same kind Gemini had tasted on his lips just moments before.

"Hey, don't laugh. I'm serious," Gemini argued. Kind of.

He knew he was being silly, of course. He also knew what Fourth had just told him had nothing to do with his toys, that it went far deeper than Gemini could even imagine. But he didn't know any other way to console him than by saying what was on his mind in that exact moment. He felt that what Fourth needed most from him was clarity and sincerity, and he wanted to convey his feelings raw and direct. So this was his way of doing it.

"I promise I'll do my best," he ended up saying. "Even if what we have doesn't work out, I'll still do my best not to cause you any hard feelings. You'll never need to worry."

Fourth placed a hand on Gemini's cheek. "You're so pretty," he muttered.

Gemini frowned. "Why so random?"

Fourth smiled again, his eyes even more teary now. "You're pretty. Your words are pretty. Your heart is pretty. You make me want to make it work even if it doesn't. You make me want to dream of a new future, Gem. I… I'm scared… but I don't think I can give up on you."

“Then don’t give up on me,” Gemini replied.

Two teardrops slipped from Fourth’s beautiful eyes and slid down his cheeks.

Then, he silently nodded.

—

After a while, Fourth had to leave for a few hours for work, but as soon as his shift ended, he came back with his books, his laptop, and a backpack filled with his personal belongings. They spent the rest of the day studying and snacking in between.

The next morning, after a night full of cuddling, of course, they went back to their books without wasting any time.

Truth be told, Gemini was more worried about Fourth’s exams than his own, because Fourth seemed like he hadn’t really paid much attention to his studies during the time when they weren’t on good terms. He wanted Fourth to start studying for the exam he had on Monday and to prepare day by day so he could catch up and do his best in all of them. But he didn’t really have any authority over Fourth. After all, Fourth was nothing if not a free soul.

Gemini understood just how free he was when he suddenly found himself on Fourth’s lap after getting up for a moment to grab a nib for his pen. In a split second, Fourth’s arms were around him, his face pressed nose-first against Gemini’s chest.

“Um… Fourth?” Gemini called, even though he didn’t waste the chance to hug him back.

Fourth made an unintelligible sound from where he was buried in Gemini’s T-shirt.

Gemini couldn’t help the chuckle that escaped him. “What are you saying?”

Fourth didn’t repeat his words, if those had even been words, but he pressed a kiss to Gemini’s chest over the fabric instead.

Gemini bent his neck to return the kiss on top of Fourth’s head.

This made Fourth look up and rest his chin on the same spot he had just been hiding. “I miss you,” he said, looking absolutely adorable.

“We’ve been stuck together for two days now. How could you miss me?” Gemini asked in a slightly shy voice. He still couldn’t believe he could sit in Fourth’s lap so casually like this, especially when he was being this cute just for him.

Had he saved a country in his past life or something to deserve this?

“That’s not what I’m saying,” Fourth replied promptly. “I miss being close to you.”

Gemini raised his eyebrows. “Aren’t we already close?”

“Gemini,” Fourth said with an exasperated sigh. “I mean close like this. Can you not study sitting here?”

“On your lap?”

“Yeah?”

Gemini felt his mouth drop open. “Of course not, it’s going to kill your blood circulation. I’m heavy.”

“You’re not heavy.”

“Not happening, Fourth.”

“Then let’s study on the bed so we can sit together.”

“No, that’s going to… distract me.”

Fourth gave him a long look. “That’s the point.”

As soon as Fourth’s words registered in Gemini’s brain, he let out a shriek and tried to jump out of his grip. He couldn’t, of course. Those gym bro arms were like iron bars around him. But he tried his best anyway.

“Don’t say things like that,” Gemini said with one last struggle. “You need to study.”

Fourth shook his head, which caused his chin to rub on Gemini’s skin. “We can study more later.”

“Fourth, don’t put ideas in my head, you know how I get,” Gemini argued.

“I actually love how you get.”

For the love of gods…

Fourth wasn’t supposed to love Gemini’s evil twin. Gemini’s evil twin was bad. Gemini’s evil twin was trouble.

“You won’t love it if you fail your exam tomorrow.” Gemini shook his head.

Fourth didn’t say anything at first, but his hand did sneak into Gemini’s t-shirt, and his fingertips started tracing a circle low on his back. “It’s okay, you’ll cheer me up.”

Gemini bit his lip. He was getting swayed so easily that he felt like a joke to himself. “But we shouldn’t waste time like that. I’ll feel really bad if you fail.”

“I won’t fail,” Fourth said with a voice more serious. “I promise I’ll pass tomorrow’s exam if you let me fuck you right now. I’m sure I’ll find the motivation to study until the morning if you do.”

“You’ll…” Gemini blinked over fifteen times. “What?”

Fourth gave him a slow smile. “I’ll... fuck you? Hopefully?”

Gemini gulped, visibly and loudly.

He was too thirsty of a human being to survive being in the close vicinity of Fourth.

“Uh… Um…” he tore his gaze from Fourth’s and looked around. He thought maybe seeing his books would wake him up from this daydream. This fanfiction. This entry scene of a self-produced porn with a theme. Whatever this was. He had to wake up.

It didn’t work.

“You don’t want me inside of you?” Fourth asked, his mouth still dirty as it had always been.

That worsened the situation.

However, Gemini had never been a good liar, so he casually breathed out an “I do.”

He just skipped the part where he wanted it so much he was about to lose his last marbles in about two seconds. Also, the part where he’d been wanting it since forever and a day, and then another day extra. And the part where he hadn’t even known how much he wanted it until hearing it out loud from Fourth’s shameless lips.

Maybe he was the shameless one, actually.

Fourth removed the hand that wasn’t doing funny stuff in Gemini’s t-shirt, and used it to cup his face, turning it back toward him. When their eyes finally met, he spoke in an almost whisper. “Baby, please let me make you mine.”

Gemini felt his legs turn to jelly.

“But- but-” he stuttered. “We’ll go back to studying after one time. Okay?”

Fourth shrugged, as if he had everything and their mothers under control. “Whatever you say, pretty.”

—

The first thing Fourth did was to carry Gemini to the bed and strip him bare, before laying him in the middle of the mattress above the sheets. He himself was fully clothed, and Gemini didn’t understand what was happening until he was completely naked under Fourth and his heavy gaze. This made Gemini feel really embarrassed -being the only one without clothes, and Fourth staring at him so intensely- so he started squirming a bit. But it all stopped when Fourth caught both of his hands and pushed them above his head on the pillow, keeping them in a lock with one hand.

Then, his warm lips landed on one of Gemini’s inner wrists with a soft kiss. And that was when Gemini went completely immobile, like a deer in headlights, frozen, stunned. He

started expecting anything and everything, and was completely ready for whatever was to come. He wanted it all.

After that lingering touch, Fourth moved a little lower and put another kiss on another spot. Then another one, and another one, he moved lower and lower, leaving a wet trail behind. When he was on the inner side of Gemini's bicep, he parted his lips and sucked on the sensitive skin for a second. Even though it was an incredibly delicate contact, Gemini felt a fuzzy feeling rapidly spread in his chest, causing his toes curl, making his fingers hold onto Fourth's for support.

When Fourth was done with one arm, he swiftly moved to the other one, giving it the same attention, staring from the very top again. This time, with completely open kisses all the way down, taking his time and enjoying every bit of skin he could taste.

He didn't stop it at the base of Gemini's arm when he was done with it, he moved even lower. He kissed Gemini's collarbones, traced the line in the middle of his chest that led to his belly button with his greedy mouth, unrushed. He started biting and licking here and there, doing whatever he wanted, whenever he wanted, and Gemini had no intention of ever stopping him.

When he was far down enough, he let Gemini's wrists go, but this time, he took hold of one of his legs and lifted it over his shoulder, so he could press his lips on the inner thighs, biting and sucking hard enough to leave visible marks behind in the area that was private enough.

Gemini's arms were now free, but he was so lost in the sensation that he couldn't even have the chance to think about what to do with them, so he chose to hold onto the top of his pillow while he pressed his lips together tightly not to moan out loud this early into the game.

But, man, it was almost impossible when the guy above him was so skillful with his tongue.

Fourth spent a little more time on Gemini's thighs, hips, and waist, not leaving a spot untouched, before he wrapped an arm around Gemini and turned him on his side. He pushed Gemini's upper knee toward his chest for support, easing him lower into the mattress before positioning himself behind him, his mouth now brushing his back.

"Now, you're gonna kiss my opposite side?" Gemini asked in a joking tone, trying to make himself feel less shy when his bare ass was out in the open like this in their new position.

"I'll kiss you everywhere," Fourth said over his shoulderblade. "I want to worship every part of you."

Gemini had nothing intelligent to say to that. He let out a pathetically long sigh and tried to hold onto his sanity instead. "Okay," he barely whispered.

"I missed you so much," Fourth muttered as his hand caressed Gemini's thigh on his bent leg, moving up and down in a slow kneading motion. "It felt like hell. I don't want to go through that again."

He kissed Gemini's shoulder and neck, and when he was right under Gemini's earlobe, while gently sucking on the skin, his hand slid to the back side, dipped down, and found the bundle

of tight muscles there, his fingertips making a small round on it.

The touch was very delicate, feathery, and almost there, but Gemini was so on the edge that he couldn't help but throw his head back out of pure anticipation.

"Fourth," he called with a cracked voice.

"So needy," Fourth whispered into his ear with a little chuckle.

Then, he left Gemini cold and hanging for about ten seconds before returning to his exact position with his fingers slick and already prodding Gemini's entrance. Gemini took a deep breath and tried to relax as Fourth had taught him before, and after a couple of gentle pushes, a finger was already inside, filling him.

Fourth moved that single finger in and out with a slow rhythm for a while, probably giving Gemini a chance to get used to the sensation, but making him feel even more restless without knowing. After a while, thankfully not too long later, he added another finger.

And that was it.

"Oh, my god," Gemini breathed out as he reached back and held onto Fourth's neck.

Fourth started kissing his cheek as tenderly as his fingers stretched Gemini's inner walls. "You're doing so well. Just breathe in and out and let me get you ready, okay?"

Gemini nodded in agreement. He felt like he was already ready, but he wasn't going to argue with a professional.

He let Fourth do his thing, and tried not to focus on the pressure on his prostate, as he was already impossibly hard and leaking on his bed sheets. He didn't want to finish it before it could even start, just because he was too excited to contain himself. He had never felt like this much of an amateur in his whole life. He couldn't fit in his own skin, he wanted out right then and there.

The fingers made slippery sounds as they penetrated him and as the muscles started loosening up around them. The feeling of them coming in, and the sound of them gliding out… it was too much for Gemini to handle, he was being stimulated at every sense.

He was rubbing the back of Fourth's head, trying to be as close to him as possible, and that seemed to do the trick and rewarded him with the third finger. The extra fullness didn't trigger too much discomfort, and all Gemini could feel was want, want, want. He wanted more. More. Way more.

Everything was nice, and well, Gemini held it back just fine for a while, but after a few minutes, he was at his limit.

"Fourth, this is enough," he whined. "Let's do it."

Fourth shook his head. "I don't want you to hurt."

Oh, he was pulling that card again.

Gemini was adamant. “I can hurt a little, I’m a grown man. Please, let’s do it already.”

“A little bit more.”

“No, Fourth. Now.”

Fourth took a second to think about it, but then pulled his fingers out and made Gemini lie on his back once again.“Don’t blame me when you remember me in the middle of your exam tomorrow, sitting on that hard chair, then,” he said casually as he took a seat between Gemini’s legs.

“Oh, would you look at that,” Gemini made a slapping gesture in the air as if the wind could hurt the guy. “Who was begging to have sex twenty minutes ago?”

Fourth laughed as he pulled his t-shirt off. The fact that he was still clothed was a crime anyway. “That was before I got you under me, slick and naked.”

“You’re such an asshole,” Gemini tsked, but his eyes did a tour on Fourth’s naked torso. He had gone days without seeing that scenery, the banter wasn’t going to stop him from enjoying it to the fullest.

“Asshole? Who teaches you all these bad words?” Fourth lowered the pajama pants Gemini had lent him, along with his briefs, and picked up a condom pack to roll on. “My innocent Gemini is all gone now. So sad.”

He sprang free, fully erect, dark red, and throbbing.

Gemini felt his throat go dry at the sight. “You kiss me with that filthy mouth, that’s why,” he muttered out.

When Fourth was finally done, he lowered his whole body over Gemini. “Yes, and I’ll kiss you even more,” he said a few centimeters away from Gemini’s lips.

Gemini didn’t answer, but closed the gap between them instead.

They started kissing, already deep and hungry from the first touch. Their tongues lapped and intruded. Gemini wrapped his arms around Fourth’s neck to hold on tightly, purely for emotional support, and Fourth held one of his thighs to hook it around his waist.

Then, with a smooth push of hips, Fourth was in.

At first, only the head was enough for Gemini to feel like he was being ripped in two. He didn’t break the kiss, but Fourth understood his discomfort from the hitch of his breath, so he immediately stopped and gave Gemini time to get adjusted, while his kisses turned more tender and reassuring.

After a while, when Gemini started feeling fidgety once again, Fourth pushed himself a little deeper. He was really careful as he moved, slow and deliberate, until they were pressed to

each other skin to skin, and until he was completely seated on the deepest point inside Gemini.

Gemini was finally, completely full of Fourth, in more ways than he had been before.

Just like he wanted.

And against the little ache where they were connected, this was the most relieved he'd felt for a long time.

He felt complete. He felt wanted, and desired, and sought out. He felt like he owned Fourth, and that Fourth owned him back, if that even made sense. He felt dramatic, as if this new sensation were a new pair of glasses, and he could suddenly see the world in a way he never had before. He felt good. So, so good. He felt like he was capable of anything.

Fourth separated their saliva-coated lips and pulled up a little, just enough to see Gemini's face. "Are you okay?" he asked with a hint of groan in his voice. "Does it hurt?"

His face was crimson red. His cheeks and ears looked like they were on fire. His eyes screamed agony, and there was a thin layer of sweat on his forehead. He was doing his best to stay concentrated.

That warm, fuzzy feeling intensified in Gemini's chest, and as he breathed deep, it threatened to water up his eyes. He quickly shook his head to reaffirm Fourth. "I'm perfectly fine. You can move now."

Fourth searched for something in Gemini's face, but when he couldn't find it, he gave him a small smile and nodded.

He started with small thrusts at first, pull a little, push a little. But when he was sure everything worked smoothly, and Gemini wasn't complaining, he began to give it to Gemini a little harder. He rolled his hips back, almost all the way out, before pushing it right to where it had been resting two seconds ago, as if that place were home to it. He was still slow, but he made sure Gemini felt the whole journey from tip to base.

Gemini did feel it. Oh, boy, did he feel it way too well.

The pain subsided almost immediately, as Fourth found the perfect rhythm. He made sure to take care of that little spot on both his way in and out, milking it twice every thrust and making sure Gemini felt it to his core every single time he passed by.

Gemini's eyes were half closed, trying to keep watching Fourth's fully open ones, a soft moan escaping his lips every once in a while, both of his hands holding onto the skin on Fourth's back and shoulder. He got pushed up and down on the mattress, and almost forgot how to breathe properly in between those delicious thrusts as he leaked even more on his own stomach between them.

Fourth picked up his pace. He was silent as he always had been, except for very occasional grunts, but his blush was now past his neck and reached down to his chest. He kept rocking

Gemini, rocking his bed and his whole world at the same time, with a quiet manner. Yet, the fire in him was apparent from his eyes. He was lost in a whole hurricane inside.

“Let me watch you a little,” he muttered then, and pushed himself up to sit on his knees.

When he was up, he lifted both of Gemini’s legs and hooked the knees over his own elbows, he never broke the connection down there, but as soon as he was satisfied with the way Gemini was all open to him, he started moving once again. This time, with even more ease, rolling it in and out smoothly and repeatedly, using the hold he had on Gemini’s thighs to pull him every time he pushed, so they could meet in the middle with more force.

He went on and on. He never once slowed down, but he didn’t go faster either. He took his time and made sure they were both lost in pleasure with his punishing rhythm, Gemini a whining, moaning, crying mess who wasn’t even sure where to hold or how to keep himself still, and himself looking like he actually wanted to eat Gemini alive after doing him senseless tonight.

“You’re so beautiful,” Fourth gasped, his fingers reaching to hold onto Gemini’s waist, a little too strongly, probably leaving pink lines behind, and pushing Gemini’s legs even higher for himself. “You feel so good. I can’t believe I waited this long to fuck you.”

Gemini felt his own spit pooling in his mouth. He tried to swallow it before he became the first person to die during sex out of embarrassment at his partner’s words.

“You’re so tight, so good. You were made for me. You were made to be mine..” Fourth didn’t stop. He was on a roll, he was in his own world. He wasn’t aware of Gemini’s agony. Or maybe he was, but he liked it anyway. “Look how beautiful we look connected like this. We fit perfectly.”

He was for sure going to kill Gemini at this pace if he kept speaking.

Gemini reached over and caught Fourth’s hands on his torso. “Let me up,” he said. “I want to be close to you.”

Fourth didn’t seem like he understood what Gemini wanted to do, but he swiftly complied anyway. He let go of Gemini’s knees and wrapped his arms around his waist, lifting him up.

Gemini used the momentum to climb onto Fourth’s lap with his legs on both sides of Fourth, then wrapped his arms around his shoulders. When he was up, his mouth immediately landed on his neck and started kissing him like a hungry man. He’d never done anything like this before, so he wasn’t exactly sure how to, but he braced himself up by taking strength from his knees and dropped himself down on Fourth’s length.

It… felt amazing.

So he did again. And again.

Fourth was still holding him around his waist, and for a while, he let Gemini do what he was planning to accomplish. He waited for Gemini to be comfortable with the flow, and then, he

started thrusting up into him, meeting him in the middle every time Gemini fell back. As soon as they were back on their previous pace, they were working together as if they'd done this thousands of times before.

Gemini rode him, tasted him everywhere he could reach, then found Fourth's lips for another deep kiss once in a while, in a cycle. Then, Fourth made him arch his back, and sucked and nibble on his nipples, making him cry out painful moans. Gemini's erection between them was unattended, except for being trapped between their bodies and their constant friction; it was twitching, almost on the edge to release it all.

Gemini started getting louder and louder, signaling he was close. Way too close.

And Fourth knew it, because he tumbled Gemini back onto the pillows and started ramming into him with no mercy, luring the orgasm out.

After that, it took only a few forceful thrusts for Gemini to open his mouth for a silent scream, throw his head back, and spill all over his own chest.

Spasming, buckling, surrendering.

Yet, Fourth wasn't done, and he kept going for more and more powerful strokes, making Gemini tear up from the pure overstimulation, his vision completely blurry and his moans now turned into mellow whimpers.

Then, Fourth finally groaned loudly, and let it go, as he filled the laxed between them hot and heavy.

He then fell on Gemini's wet and naked body, still connected.

They couldn't speak for a while, out of exhaustion.

But then, Gemini rubbed a palm on Fourth's now way longer hair. "Let's take a shower."

Fourth put a kiss on Gemini's chest where his face was pressed. "Okay, but I want fuck you again against the tills."

Gemini felt Fourth twitching inside of him, and rolled his eyes. Was he a beast or what?

However, he agreed to it anyway, because he was the same beast species as Fourth anyway.

—

So, the next day, Gemini was in the middle of his exam and wanted to cross his legs, but moving around on this hard chair felt like death.

He cursed both himself and Fourth out, silently, under his breath.

He knew he wasn't supposed to let Fourth do him in that shower.

Chapter End Notes

I need to run to the office now. I'm late.

Let me know your thoughts!

Chapter 12: He Is Determined

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Fourth was in a wedding gown, and Gemini was in a suit and a red necktie. They were holding hands in the center of the town square, surrounded by all NPC townies, sharing a kiss under a white arch adorned by pixelated flowers and sealing the deal for their future married life, their happily ever after.

Confetti and flower petals were scattered in the air as the mayor announced them as spouses via a speech bubble. Some townies cheered, some clapped, and the kids jumped up and down in their spots, and the 10-second cut scene ended with a fade to black.

“That’s it?” Fourth asked, voice flat, staring at his own laptop screen in disbelief. “We waited this long for this cheap ass two-second town square wedding?”

Gemini pressed his lips together as the smile fighting to surface was too big to contain. “Why? It was cute,” he muttered, almost missing Fourth’s expression in the meantime.

Fourth didn’t look up from the game. “We used all our points, you paid real money to buy me this wedding dress, and we don’t even get a party at the town bar? It’s so disappointing.”

“You shouldn’t drink anyway. You’re pregnant,” Gemini stated as a matter of fact.

“I can party with a baby. I’m a really capable young mother, you know?”

“We’ll throw our own party at home.”

That made Fourth turn to him. “You’re right, we can have our own party for two now. We’re officially married.” He then exaggeratedly wiggled his eyebrows.

Gemini was already barely able to contain his giggles, and with that sight, he lost the war completely and started laughing.

Fourth shook his head with a heavy sigh. “Aren’t you too happy for someone who got married in just a game?”

Gemini kept chucking.

Whatever. He was happy! He was finally a husband! He was finally married! He’d worked so hard and finally pocketed three wedding checklist points! Seven more were on the way, and he was about to get ten more when the baby was finally here. He was going to be point-rich. Of course, he was happy!

“You’d think we signed a real marriage registration,” Fourth added. “Not yet. You need to accept me as your boyfriend first.”

And that instantly shut Gemini up. An awkward silence took over for three long seconds before he swallowed awkwardly and started coughing as his spit went down the wrong pipe. Of course, even his throat decided to act stupid when he was trying to be normal in front of Fourth for once.

It was Fourth's turn to laugh now. "There, there, don't die on me," he said as he reached over and rubbed Gemini's back. "I like you alive."

Gemini coughed even more, but he quickly ducked his head and tried -and failed- to hide behind his laptop screen. His whole face was burning, and his heart was beating on the tip of his nose. He fumbled with his glasses, trying to look busy.

"Are we not there yet?" Fourth asked, playful, but there was a hint of carefulness in his question.

Gemini decided to play dumb. Well, it wasn't that far from what he was anyway. "What do you mean?"

He refused to make eye contact with Fourth. He knew the guy was giving him the most gorgeous, sparkling, Bambi eyes at that moment, as if he wasn't already looking so cute in Gemini's pink t-shirt covered in hundreds of Patrick Star figures. Not to mention the fact that he was only in boxers from the waist down, and all those milky thighs were on display.

He looked like a nerd's dream come to life.

Fourth kept staring at him. Gemini knew that, because he could feel a hole forming on the side of his face.

"Boyfriends," Fourth repeated. More serious this time. "Are we not ready to make it official yet?" He didn't beat around the bush. As usual.

Gemini pursed his lips.

Fourth sighed and reached over again and scratched under Gemini's chin. "Why are you not looking at me, kiddo?"

"You look… overwhelming," Gemini answered truthfully. Maybe too truthfully.

"You can have whatever looks pleasing to your eye. No need to be shy."

Gemini exhaled so deeply that his glasses, alongside his laptop screen, got foggy. "That's the problem." He then took a peek at Fourth for a second. "Are you serious about it?"

"What? Having me? Hell yeah, meet you in bed in two minutes."

"No!" Gemini turned his whole body to Fourth in panic. "I mean the boyfriend thing!"

Fourth dropped his hand and gave Gemini a sly smile, satisfied that Gemini was finally not avoiding him. "Yeah. I think I am."

“You want to be my boyfriend?”

“Maybe?”

Gemini watched him for a moment as Fourth leaned back in his seat and crossed his arms over his chest, looking somewhat confident and somewhat like he was trying to play the part. Gemini wished he could read what was going on in his head. He wasn’t sure if Fourth was teasing him or if he really wanted them to start dating.

He didn’t seem to be fully here or there.

Or maybe it was Gemini’s own mind that didn’t want him to be here or there, so he didn’t have to face the music. He wasn’t ready for this yet. Just not yet.

He bit inside of his cheek as he lowered his gaze. He felt like there were too many commands entered in his system at once, and everything was about to freeze, like a blue screen was about to hit.

“Oh,” Fourth muttered, seeing his reaction. “Baby, your parts are probably too expensive for us to replace. Please cool down. Do you want me to turn on the fan?”

Gemini looked back up at Fourth, and his heart doubled in size in his chest.

Did he just… make one of Gemini’s inside jokes?

He… did. Of course, he did.

And that was the exact moment Gemini knew he was in trouble.

He was in big trouble. This music was just too good for his heart.

—

In the following days, they studied, went to school to take their exams, and spent their break times creating new bedrooms and nurseries on both of their farms, because their houses were now next to each other on land twice the size (yay, married life perks!).

Fourth seemed to do fine with his exams, but that was only because he took a few days off from his job and studied until it was bright outside, only to catch up on sleep during the day after exams. He really did give his all, even giving up food most of the time unless Gemini forced it on him. He struggled a lot, but he came out of it successfully and got pretty good grades in most of his classes.

As soon as the midterms were over, however, they went at it like bunnies. They had so much sex, as if they were the newlywed couple and not their game characters, at every single chance, that Gemini was convinced that doing it this many times a week couldn’t actually be healthy. Fourth would wake up, climb on top of Gemini, or catch him wherever he was and drag him over to the nearest flat surface to have his way. Of course, Gemini had been willing

since yesterday. No, Gemini had probably been praying for the whole thing to happen way before that. They acted like two men left in the desert who had found water after a year, bouncing on each other everywhere imaginable in that small dorm room.

During all this, Fourth's 'boyfriend' idea made cameos here and there. Not often enough to be taken seriously, but enough times for Gemini to never be able to forget about it.

Fourth would cuddle him to sleep and suddenly mutter, "I guess sleeping with a boyfriend would feel like this," absolutely nonchalant, burying his face into Gemini's hair.

Or he would buy Gemini's favorite snacks on the way back from class and say, "Just imagine how good I'll treat you when I'm your boyfriend."

He drove Gemini INSANE.

Gemini was confused. Really, really confused. One huge part of him was dying to be Fourth's boyfriend. (Duh, had anyone seen the guy?) And he knew that they were already doing some of the most atrocious things that only couples did. (He could physically feel Fourth's 'presence' whenever he moved, from the amount of action they were having.) But the other part of him wanted to solve whatever was wrong with himself first.

First, he wanted to know why he felt so strongly about this man. What could be the reason?

Gemini had always thought he was incapable of love. He'd thought it wasn't a thing he would ever experience and accepted himself like that. He was ready to spend the rest of his life single.

But now, all he wanted was Fourth. To be near Fourth, to be in his arms, to be the point of his attention, to be the target of his kisses and his jokes and his affection and his words. He wanted to be a part of Fourth. He wanted to dream of a future with him, a future he'd never even imagined he'd think of having before.

But why him? Why was he so different from the others?

Was it because he was a man? Was it because he was handsome? Was it because he was popular?

None of these were things Gemini was seeing for the first time.

Was it because Gemini had been feeling too lonely, and Fourth just happened to be there at the right place at the right time? This pure excitement, all these emotions Gemini carried, and the sheer size of his feelings… were they all fake?

What if one day he went back to being as dormant as he had been before he met Fourth? What if he felt just as indifferent toward him as he had when his girlfriend left? What if these warm, fuzzy, pretty feelings in his chest left him high and dry one day?

Gemini didn't want to break Fourth's heart by dragging this out for too long if Fourth really wanted something real with him. He wanted to cuddle with a boyfriend and experience the snack treatment from said boyfriend, too. But he was confused. And scared.

He was definitely scared.

So he had to make sure there was nothing wrong with him first.

The next time Fourth mentioned the forbidden word, the situation was a little different. This time, instead of just Gemini being left confused, it was a whole group of people.

It was just after midterms. Fourth walked into the council room with Gemini, and as soon as they stepped inside, the room instantly froze.

Everybody stared at them. A pin drop could be heard from the end of the hallway.

The first one to speak was Ping, albeit very quietly. “Fourth?”

Fourth waved at him as if it were just another Tuesday and walked Gemini to the computer desks, not even sparing his friend a glance.

“What are you doing?” Ping tried again.

Fourth kept walking. “What? I’m holding my future boyfriend’s hand.”

Yes, they were holding hands.

Yes, they were future boyfrie- *WHAT?*

As Fourth’s voice reached the farthest corner in the room, the ice started cracking from the edges, and soon enough, the whole place went into pure chaos.

People started screaming, someone was clapping, Winny climbed on his desk, and Ping kept yelling, “Boyfriend? What do you mean by that? What is a boyfriend?!”

Even Est was loud; he was laughing his butt off.

Fourth ignored all of them, like he had already been expecting all this, and calmly took Gemini’s backpack and helped him settle in front of the computer. He then took a seat next to him and placed the bag on the other desk.

Gemini never felt as self-conscious and put on the spot as he felt at that moment. He pushed his glasses back on his nose about three times before finally letting it go and leaning close to Fourth to whisper, “Maybe you should explain to them what’s going on. They must be confused.”

Fourth took advantage of Gemini’s closeness and stole a quick peck on his cheek and whispered back. “Don’t pay attention to them.”

People in the background started wailing.

Gemini worried his bottom lip. “I can’t… concentrate… when they watch us like this.”

Fourth looked at his poor bottom lip and then back up at his eyes before sighing. “Okay, I’ll handle them. You focus on your work.”

With that, he swiftly stood up, placed another kiss on Gemini’s cheek, causing yet another uproar, and went over to his friends to give them the details.

The group gathered on the opposite corner of the room and started speaking in hushed voices. From what Gemini could hear, Fourth gave his friends a basic rundown of the events without going into too much detail, and told them that they had good feelings for each other, and decided to see where things would go.

At first, the group was too stunned to react, but once they came to their senses and were convinced they weren’t being subjected to some big, elaborate prank, they started asking a bunch of questions.

“You’re going to stop going out to have fun now?” someone asked.

Fourth agreed without skipping a beat.

“No more TikTok scandals?”

No voiced response. But a disappointed “Ah,” from the group followed.

“Is this why you left me alone at the bar that day?” Ping chimed, in a little loudly, and immediately got shushed by the group.

Fourth agreed again.

The interrogation was heavy after that.

Was this why Fourth had been so depressed before midterms?

“Yes, I broke Gem’s heart, so I was sad,” Fourth admitted.

Had they done the deed?

“None of your business.”

Were they in love?

“Almost.”

Were they dating?

“Not yet.”

Why not?

“We’re not ready.”

Naturally, Gemini couldn't really have any work done, as he couldn't help but listen to them. He couldn't really focus, not that he tried very hard. Even though they were being pretty quiet not to disturb him, Gemini felt like he spent even more effort to hear them instead of appreciating the silence. He didn't know he would be this curious about what their reaction would be like. Or how Fourth would speak about their relationship. Or if Fourth wanted to be his boyfriend or not.

Well, he was curious, apparently.

The talk ended after a few minutes of back-and-forth and silly banter among the council members. Fourth eventually dismissed the group and returned to Gemini's side, leaving the rest to go back to their desks awkwardly.

Gemini, who was still staring at the empty screen, was unintentionally rigid and jumpy as Fourth approached him.

Fourth stood behind him and started smoothing his curls. "Don't be nervous. They're not bad people. They support us."

Gemini didn't move a muscle. "It's not them I'm nervous about."

"Then what is it?"

Gemini didn't respond.

So Fourth slid his hands down and placed them on Gemini's shoulders, his thumbs rubbing his neck. "You don't need to be nervous about anything. I can make everything right, whatever it is."

Gemini couldn't help the small smile tugging at his lips. His tension slowly melted under Fourth's warm touch as he looked up to Fourth, his vision upside down.

Fourth returned his smile. "You don't believe me?"

"I do."

"Are you sure?"

Gemini leaned his head on Fourth's belly. "What did they say about us?"

"That I'm too filthy for you," Fourth answered, cupping Gemini's chin with one hand.

"Yeah, they are right."

"Whatever. You're stuck with me, so you'll have to get filthy too."

Gemini fake gasped. "Is that a threat?"

"Baby, I'm not letting you go," Fourth said with a murmur.

“Hey, you two!” Winny shouted from the back. “Get a room!”

“Wait, are we allowed to bring boyfriends into the council room now?” Est asked, probably directing it at Winny.

“What boyfriend?” Winny shot back.

Est didn’t answer.

Fourth took advantage of the sudden lack of attention and gave Gemini a Spider-Man kiss.

—

The ball hit the ground the loud echo boomed in the court.

Gemini was out of breath and drenched in sweat, and the humidity of the upcoming rain didn’t help his case as he held his knees and tried to collect his composure.

Fourth, on the other hand, was also sweaty and disheveled, but he still looked nothing less than Johnny Bravo, especially now with his longer hair, which somehow always ended up looking spiky. He was dribbling the ball and striking poses as if he were on the cover for Men’s Health.

“You know,” Gemini croaked out, and ended up coughing a few times before continuing. “You know that you are five points behind, right?”

“Yeah,” Fourth said as he tried to roll the ball on the tip of his index finger and quickly failed.

Gemini would laugh, but he knew it would probably kill his lungs. “Then why are you acting like you’re winning right now?”

Fourth looked at him in the eye and smirked big. “Because I’m winning in life.”

“Oh, shut up,” Gemini rolled his eyes. “Should we go buy water?”

“I am!” Fourth insisted. “I get to play my favorite sport with my boy- I mean, my Gemini. Of course, I’m winning.”

Here he goes again.

Gemini straightened his back and gazed at Fourth without saying anything.

Fourth bounced the ball a few more times, then threw it toward the basket, sending it cleanly through the hoop.

Then, he turned around to face Gemini. “Tell me what it is that makes you so anxious.”

Gemini was taken aback by the sudden question. He blinked. “I’m not anxious. I’m winning here.”

Fourth took a step toward him, but they were still quite far apart. “Why do you fall into deep thought every time I mention being boyfriends?”

“I-” Gemini initially wanted to argue, but hearing what Fourth said, he decided to just shut up instead.

“And you always go silent like this,” Fourth added. “I don’t want to pressure you into anything, but I want you to share your worries with me. I don’t want you to carry that burden alone when I can carry half of it for you.”

Gemini held the hems of his t-shirt’s collars and raised them, wiping the sweat from his forehead and taking this time to collect his words. When he was done, he saw that Fourth was patiently waiting for his answer.

“I… I’m just…” he muttered for a moment. Then, he just let it out. “Do you really want to be my boyfriend?”

Fourth looked like he was ready for that question. He quickly nodded. “I do.”

“Like, seriously? Really?”

“Yes.”

Gemini frowned.

“Why?” Fourth asked, looking a little worried now. “It’s okay if you don’t want to do it. We don’t need to label anything.”

Gemini shook his head. “But how? How could you be so sure? Aren’t you supposed to be incapable of love?”

Fourth stared at him for a second. Then went, “I chose to stay away from love. But now I want it, and I want it to be with you.”

It sounded so simple and easy when he said it like that. Yet, it didn’t answer any of the questions in Gemini’s mind.

That was because his questions weren’t really about Fourth.

“Do you doubt my feelings for you? Is that why?” Fourth asked.

“No,” Gemini denied quickly. “I don’t doubt you. Not at all.”

“So you doubt yourself,” Fourth guessed.

Gemini couldn’t say anything to that. He wanted to look away, but he didn’t want to run away either.

Fourth sighed and started walking toward him. When he was close enough, he wrapped his arms around Gemini, pinning his arms to his sides, and rested his chin on Gemini's shoulder. They were both drenched, and it was way too hot outside to be this close to a human body, but nothing felt safer than Fourth's hugs.

"Tell me, what is it?" Fourth murmured.

Gemini's hands were squished between their bodies, but his fingers were still nervously fiddling in that tight space. "Why is it you?"

Fourth pulled him even closer. "Why is it me?"

"Why isn't it just anyone random on the street, but specifically you? Why not any other man? How did we find each other and end up breaking our rules for each other?" Gemini rambled. "There must be something special about you, and I want to know why. I want it to make sense to me. Logical sense."

Fourth raised a hand and started rubbing Gemini's back up and down. "I know my pretty boy only thinks in numbers and clear yeses and nos, but some things can't really be explained when it comes to feelings, right?"

"There must be a reason," Gemini insisted.

So Fourth leaned back and caught his gaze. "It's not me who's special," he said. "It's you."

That made Gemini even more confused. "What do you mean?"

Fourth looked deep into his eyes, almost as if he were staring into his thoughts. His expression was soft, but he tried his hardest to convey his point. "Your heart is special. It doesn't let anyone in easily. It doesn't like just anyone. I'm just lucky to be picked by it."

Gemini closed his eyes shut. This man was going to be the end of him.

"These things called love and attraction," Fourth continued. "They have all kinds of spectrums, colors, and shades… Everybody can't be the same, right? That would be boring."

Gemini didn't open his eyes, but his breath got stuck in his throat.

"Your color simply matched mine. That's about it," Fourth said.

Gemini felt like he was choking. "I like your color," he muttered.

"I like yours better," Fourth replied.

Then Gemini finally looked at him, letting him see all the fear and uncertainty in his eyes. "What if I lose it again?"

But Fourth was not the one to waver. "You won't."

"How do you know that?"

“Because it’s not something you found later on. It was always in you.”

Gemini understood right then, that this one, this man, this kind soul was for him. Maybe he didn’t think he was special, and maybe he really wasn’t, but for Gemini, he was one of a kind. A kind that was the exact puzzle piece to fit right in Gemini’s heart. A kind that Gemini’s whole existence found peace with. A kind that opened Gemini’s doors and introduced him to a garden full of beautiful flowers.

He was the kind that Gemini hadn’t even known existed.

Gemini had never felt the need for love in his life, and it still wasn’t a necessity. It wasn’t something missing or something essential for him to go on. Yet he had it now, and he had it in the most perfect way, and he was going to cherish it. He wasn’t going to waste this precious chance.

However, he didn’t have the words to say any of this out loud. So leaned down and put a soft, slow, small kiss on Fourth’s lips.

When they separated, “You know what?” Fourth whispered, their mouths only a few centimeters apart. “I love that you’re taller than me. I always try to reach out for your kisses, and you grant them to me.”

“You love a lot of stuff about me.”

“You don’t even know half of it.”

Gemini felt like giggling again. “So, boyfriends?”

Fourth nodded. “Boyfriends.”

With that, they kissed more.

—

Gemini took his time to gather their stuff and return the ball to the building, while Fourth ran to the nearest convenience store to bring him water. Then, they held hands and walked out of the court and the campus.

The court was a little far from where Fourth usually parked his bike, but it was fine for them, as they chattered about this and that, laughing out loud about the silliest things. Fourth explained a movie he remembered from childhood, but Gemini was convinced a movie like that had never existed.

They entered the parking lot, started walking toward the bike, and out of nowhere, a woman came into view.

It was almost like deja vu.

This time, the woman wasn't screaming. She didn't even look angry. She looked out of it.

She looked… drunk.

She was sitting cross-legged on the pavement next to the bike. Her hair was all over the place, her face flushed red, her lipstick was smudged on her chin, and her blouse was torn on the collar. She seemed like she had been in a fight.

As soon as Fourth saw her, he stopped in his tracks and pulled Gemini back, which alerted Gemini and made him notice her presence as well.

"I clearly told you not to come to my school," Fourth said in a cold tone that instantly made Gemini shiver.

The woman hadn't really been aware of their arrival until that point, but after hearing Fourth, she looked up, not really fazed, barely holding herself straight. "Of course," she squawked. "He never answers my calls and always ignores my texts because he is busy playing with his new bitch."

Gemini felt Fourth's hand flex in his.

"You're growing your hair now, is it for him?" she asked, but didn't wait for an answer. "It must be. You've never done that before."

"You should go home," Fourth said, still sounding calm.

The woman ignored him. "You think he's special, huh?" she said. "Well, he's not. He's just another one."

Gemini was getting nervous, as he had never really learned who this person was, and seeing the way she had come to find Fourth while she was this drunk made him feel really uneasy.

"Fourth," he whispered in an attempt to trigger an escape.

"Do you think this little boy is going to love you?" The woman's voice cut him off. She sounded more like she was talking to herself, but the prickles in her words were clearly aimed at Fourth. "He won't. Nobody will. Only me. Only I can truly love you. He's going to leave you, just like your father did."

Fourth took a deep breath. "That's enough. I'll call a taxi for you."

"No," the woman said curtly. "You already know he won't love you. You are fooling yourself."

Fourth let go of Gemini's hand and walked up to the woman. He quickly crouched down and held her arms, trying to get her to stand up.

"Let me go," she cried out loud, struggling to get out of his hold.

“You’re going home,” Fourth told her, and after a few seconds of hassle, he finally pulled her up to her feet.

Even when she was standing, she still fought to get out of Fourth’s hold, but when she realized he wasn’t giving in no matter what, she eventually stopped and finally seemed to calm down.

Or that was what Gemini thought.

Because as soon as Fourth let her go, she didn’t even wait a second. She let out a high-pitched scream and ran.

She ran.

Toward Gemini.

Gemini blinked only once, and in the next second, the woman had both hands in his hair and pulled him down with all her strength.

Gemini didn’t have the time to register what was going on and didn’t really know what to do, as nobody had ever pulled his hair before. He’d seen her coming, but couldn’t react before his head was yanked down. Her furious screams rang in his ears, her deep alcohol smell clogged his lungs, and his scalp hurt.

Then, suddenly, the woman was ripped off him and shoved aside, causing her to fall onto the pavement like a bag of dirt.

“What the fuck do you think you are doing?” Fourth almost roared as he pushed Gemini behind him in panic, holding him with a protective arm around him. “Have you lost your damn mind?!”

The woman quickly turned to face them, as if she had been slapped, from where she lay on the floor. “How dare you!” she shouted.

“You will never touch him again,” Fourth spoke over her. “Do you understand me? You will not raise a hand on him, or I’ll make you regret it.”

“I am your mother!” the woman bit out as she clumsily pushed her hair out of her face with both hands. “I gave birth to you! Are you threatening me over a whore now?”

Fourth fell silent for a second, then his voice went low. Dangerously low. “Watch your words.”

“Or what?” she screamed.

Fourth’s clenched jaw was visible even from where Gemini stood. He looked like he was about to pop a vein from anger. “You can walk all over me, as you have all my life. But I won’t let you hurt him. Not with your words, and especially not with your hands.”

The woman gasped, her hands dropping from her face. “Are you choosing a boy over your own mother?”

“He is my boyfriend.”

“Fourth, I swear to God-”

“No, Mom,” Fourth cut her off again. “This is the line I told you not to cross, yet you did it anyway. You’re on your own now.”

“Fourth!” the woman tried to interject. She suddenly seemed alarmed.

Fourth tugged Gemini toward his bike.

“Fourth,” the woman repeated as she tried to get on her feet. “Wait a minute. Let’s talk. I didn’t mean it like that.”

However, Fourth ignored her completely.

He got on the bike and guided the almost immobile Gemini onto the back. When he was sure Gemini was securely hugging him around the waist, he started the bike.

She pleaded and pleaded, her words not really intelligible, as Fourth rode away without sparing her another glance. When they turned the corner, the woman’s wailing could still be heard.

Chapter End Notes

I'm so sorry for this late update. I swear I was never this late to write a chapter before, but this new job is kicking my ass really bad. I'll try to be way quicker to write the last chapter.

Anyway, please let me know what you think. I love you!🩷

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